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OSCAR WILDE

THE WRITINGS OF OSCAR WILDE

THE WRITINGS OF OSCAR WILDE

CRITICISMS AND REVIEWS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
PADRAIC COLUM

VOLUME
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INTRODUCTION

By PADRAIC COLUM

Oscar Wilde's critical essays are a charge in a battle—a rattling charge that is to turn a well-supported position. Matthew Arnold had laid it down that the aim of criticism was to see the object as in itself it really is, and all who were for the supremacy of the reasoning and judging faculties were with him. Walter Pater made a demonstration against this position, but it was Oscar Wilde who turned it to the flashing of sabres. To see the object as in itself it really is!

Can one know anything of the object as in itself it really is? He asked, and the whole of his work was to state and to imply that one could not.

People in his time talked about painters going to nature. "What is the use of telling artists that they should try and paint nature as she really is?" asked Oscar Wilde. "What nature really is, is a question for metaphysics and not for

art. Art deals with appearances, and the eye of the man who looks at nature, the vision, in fact, of the artist, is far more important to us than what he looks at." He revealed art's relation to nature, to human life, and to morality in a few sentences that make not only a good allegory about art but a good history of art. "Art begins with abstract decoration, with purely imaginative and pleasurable work dealing with what is unreal and non-existent. That is the first stage. Then life becomes fascinated with this new wonder, and asks to be admitted into the charmed circle. Art takes life as part of her rough material, re-creates it, and re-fashions it in fresh forms; is absolutely indifferent to fact; invents, imagines, dreams, and keeps between herself and reality the impenetrable barrier of beautiful style. The third stage is when life gets the upper hand, and drives art out into the wilderness."

Those who believed that art was in representation, and those who held that the aim of criticism was to see the object as in itself it really is, have been in retreat since Wilde turned the position that Matthew Arnold held. In those days he had to speak of the Critic as Artist. Writing now he would need to speak of the Critic only. He pro-

posed a function that then had no practitioner. But after he had written of the Critic as Artist, Remy de Gourmont came to inaugurate the function that had been proposed. And if we understand Remy de Gourmont's life and influence we will know that the function that Oscar Wilde proposed for the Critic as Artist or the Critic as Philosopher was not a function that would be entirely without profit to the world.

For what is the true aim of criticism? It is not to see the object as in itself it really is, nor is it to set values on works of art for their ethical or intellectual content. The function of criticism is, as Oscar Wilde declared, to make possible the transmission of racial experience in terms of culture. The function of criticism is to separate the work that has distinction from the work that has not. The function of criticism is to develop that spirit of disinterested curiosity "which is the real root, as it is the real flower of the intellectual life." It is criticism that, according to the essay *The Critic as Artist* that makes culture possible—"it takes the cumbersome mass of creative work, and distils it into a finger essence."

Had the writer of *The Critic as Artist* been able to read the work of the writer of the Culture of

Ideas he would have accepted as part of the critic's function "the disassociation of ideas." We are all under a tyranny—Remy de Gourmont shows it—that only an enlightened criticism can break up, the tyranny of some institutional idea—the commonplace, as it may be called. A commonplace is made up by the coupling of a fact and an abstraction: crime is a fact, punishment is an abstraction that we have associated with it: crime-punishment is the commonplace that it is the function of criticism to break up. How desperately the world stands in need of a criticism that will effectively break up certain commonplaces we know—nationality-force, for one, production-imperialism, for another.

Oscar Wilde anticipated this supreme function of criticism when he wrote—"It is criticism that, recognizing no position as final, and refusing to bind itself to the shallow shibboleths of any sect or school creates that serene philosophic temper which loves truth for its own sake, and loves it not less because it knows it to be unattainable." He said too—and how much more applicable these words are to-day than they were thirty years ago when first written—"The Manchester school tried to make men realize a brotherhood of humanity by

pointing out the commercial advantages of peace. It sought to degrade the wonderful world into the common market place for the buyer and seller. . . . There are others of our own day who seek to appeal to mere emotional sympathies, or to some shallow dogmas of some vague system of ethics. . . . No, the emotions will not make us cosmopolitan any more than the greed for gain could do. It is only by the cultivation of the habit of intellectual criticism that we shall be able to rise superior to race prejudices. . . . Criticism will annihilate race prejudices by insisting upon the unity of the human mind in the variety of its forms. If we are tempted to make war upon another nation, we shall remember that we are seeking to destroy an element of our own culture, and possibly the most important element. As long as war is regarded as wicked, it will always have its fascination. When it is looked upon as vulgar, it will cease to be popular. The change will of course be slow, and people will not be conscious of it. They will not say 'we will not war against France because her prose is perfect,' but because the prose of France is perfect, they will not hate the land. Intellectual criticism will bind Europe together in bonds far closer than those

that can be forged by the shopman or the sentimentalist. It will give us the peace that springs from understanding."

Well, since that passage was written statesmen and bankers and soldiers have been busy striving to mould the world: now that we have seen the results of their efforts does his programme for criticism seem something given down from an ivory tower. The man who wrote in this way about the function of criticism gave himself out as an æsthete, but he was an æsthete who knew man and knew the world. "Man is a rational animal who gets into a temper the moment you ask him to do anything reasonable," he said, and we have good reason now to consider his judgment of man in the mass profound.

His imitators have often made us feel that Oscar Wilde appeared a great deal in plush—in the plush of the cheap statement and the overstatement. But when we come to him directly we see how seldom, how very seldom indeed, he appears in plush. When the young make us impatient of Oscar Wilde we can get rid of that impatience by turning to Oscar Wilde. He made paradoxes with an understanding of what the paradox is. "To test Reality," he said, "we

must see it on the tight rope. When the Verities become acrobats we can judge them. That is the difference between Oscar Wilde's ideas and the ideas of the young men who have adopted his manner—we can see his ideas on the tight rope, and we perceive that they can walk it.

CRITICISMS AND REVIEWS

A FASCINATING BOOK.

Mr. Alan Cole's carefully edited translation of M. Lefébure's "History of Embroidery and Lace" (H. Grevel and Co.) is one of the most fascinating books that has appeared on this delightful subject. M. Lefébure is one of the administrators of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs at Paris, besides being a lace manufacturer; and his work has not merely an important historical value, but as a handbook of technical instruction it will be found of the greatest service by all needlewomen. Indeed, as the translator himself points out, M. Lefébure's book suggests the question whether it is not rather by the needle and the bobbin, than by the brush, the graver, or the chisel, that the influence of woman should assert itself in the arts. In Europe, at any rate, woman is sovereign in the domain of art needlework, and few men would care to dispute with her the right of using those delicate implements so intimately associated with the dexterity of her nimble and slender fingers; nor is

there any reason why the productions of embroidery should not, as Mr. Alan Cole suggests, be placed on the same level with those of painting, engraving, and sculpture, though there must always be a great difference between those purely decorative arts that glorify their own material and the more imaginative arts in which the material is, as it were, annihilated, and absorbed into the creation of a new form. In the beautifying of modern houses it certainly must be admitted—indeed, it should be more generally recognised than it is—that rich embroidery on hangings and curtains, portières, couches, and the like, produces a far more decorative and far more artistic effect than can be gained from our somewhat wearisome English practice of covering the walls with pictures and engravings; and the almost complete disappearance of embroidery from dress has robbed modern costume of one of the chief elements of grace and fancy.

That, however, a great improvement has taken place in English embroidery during the last ten or fifteen years cannot, I think, be denied. It is shown not merely in the work of individual artists, such as Mrs. Holiday, Miss May Morris, and others, but also in the admirable productions of the

South Kensington School of Embroidery (the best —indeed, the only really good—school that South Kensington has produced). It is pleasant to note, on turning over the leaves of M. Lefébure's book, that in this we are merely carrying out certain old traditions of Early English art. In the seventh century, St. Ethelreda, first abbess of the Monastery of Ely, made an offering to St. Cuthbert of a sacred ornament she had worked with gold and precious stones, and the cope and maniple of St. Cuthbert, which are preserved at Durham, are considered to be specimens of *opus Anglicanum*. In the year 800 the Bishop of Durham allotted the income of a farm of two hundred acres for life to an embroideress named Eanswitha, in consideration of her keeping in repair the vestments of the clergy in his diocese. The battle standard of King Alfred was embroidered by Danish princesses; and the Anglo-Saxon Gudric gave Alcuid a piece of land on condition that she instructed his daughter in needlework. Queen Matilda bequeathed to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Caen a tunic embroidered at Winchester by the wife of one Alderet; and when William presented himself to the English nobles, after the Battle of Hastings, he wore a mantle covered with Anglo-

Saxon embroideries, which is probably, M. Lefébure suggests, the same as that mentioned in the inventory of the Bayeux Cathedral, where, after the entry relating to the *broderie à telle* (representing the conquest of England), two mantles are described—one of King William, "all of gold, powdered with crosses and blossoms of gold, and edged along the lower border with an orphrey of figures." The most splendid example of the *opus Anglicanum* now in existence is, of course, the Syon cope at the South Kensington Museum; but English work seems to have been celebrated all over the Continent. Pope Innocent IV so admired the splendid vestments worn by the English clergy in 1246, that he ordered similar articles from Cistercian monasteries in England. St. Dunstan, the artistic English monk, was known as a designer for embroideries; and the stole of St. Thomas à Becket is still preserved in the cathedral at Sens, and shows us the interlaced scroll forms used by Anglo-Saxon MS. illuminators.

How far this modern artistic revival of rich and delicate embroidery will bear fruit depends, of course, almost entirely on the energy and study that women are ready to devote to it; but I think that it must be admitted that all our decorative

arts in Europe at present have, at least, this element of strength—that they are in immediate relationship with the decorative arts of Asia. Wherever we find in European history a revival of decorative art, it has, I fancy, nearly always been due to Oriental influence and contact with Oriental nations. Our own keenly intellectual art has more than once been ready to sacrifice real decorative beauty either to imitative presentation or to ideal motive. It has taken upon itself the burden of expression, and has sought to interpret the secrets of thought and passion. In its marvellous truth of presentation it has found its strength, and yet its weakness is there also. It is never with impunity that an art seeks to mirror life. If Truth has her revenge upon those who do not follow her, she is often pitiless to her worshippers. In Byzantium the two arts met—Greek art with its intellectual sense of form, and its quick sympathy with humanity; Oriental art, with its gorgeous materialism, its frank rejection of imitation, its wonderful secrets of craft and colour, its splendid textures, its rare metals and jewels, its marvellous and priceless traditions. They had, indeed, met before, but in Byzantium they were married; and the sacred tree of the Persians, the palm of Zoro-

aster, was embroidered on the hem of the garments of the Western world. Even the Iconoclasts, the Philistines of theological history, who, in one of those strange outbursts of rage against Beauty that seem to occur only amongst European nations, rose up against the wonder and magnificence of the new art, merely served to distribute its secrets more widely; and in the *Liber Pontificalis,* written in 687 by Athanasius, the librarian, we read of an influx into Rome of gorgeous embroideries, the work of men who had arrived from Constantinople and from Greece. The triumph of the Mussulman gave the decorative art of Europe a new departure —that very principle of their religion that forbade the actual representation of any object in nature being of the greatest artistic service to them, though it was not, of course, strictly carried out. The Saracens introduced into Sicily the art of weaving silken and golden fabrics; and from Sicily the manufacture of fine stuffs spread to the North of Italy, and became localised in Genoa, Florence, Venice, and other towns. A still greater art movement took place in Spain under the Moors and Saracens, who brought over workmen from Persia to make beautiful things for them. M. Lefébure tells us of Persian embroidery penetrating as far

as Andalusia; and Almeria, like Palermo, had its *Hôtel des Tiraz,* which rivalled the *Hôtel des Tiraz* at Bagdad, *tiraz* being the generic name for ornamental tissues and costumes made with them. Spangles (those pretty little discs of gold, silver, or polished steel, used in certain embroidery for dainty glinting effects) were a Saracenic invention; and Arabic letters often took the place of letters in the Roman characters for use in inscriptions upon embroidered robes and Middle Age tapestries, their decorative value being so much greater. The book of crafts by Etienne Boileau, provost of the merchants in 1258-1268, contains a curious enumeration of the different craft-guilds of Paris, among which we find "the tapiciers, or makers of the *tapis sarrasinois* (or Saracen cloths), who say that their craft is for the service only of churches, or great men like kings and counts"; and, indeed, even in our own day, nearly all our words descriptive of decorative textures and decorative methods point to an Oriental origin. What the inroads of the Mohammedans did for Sicily and Spain, the return of the Crusaders did for the other countries of Europe. The nobles who left for Palestine clad in armour, came back in the rich stuffs of the East; and their costumes, pouches

(*aumônières sarrasinoises*), and caparisons excited the admiration of the needleworkers of the West. Mathew Paris says that at the sacking of Antioch, in 1098, gold, silver, and priceless costumes were so equally distributed among the Crusaders that many who the night before were famishing and imploring relief, suddenly found themselves overwhelmed with wealth; and Robert de Clair tells us of the wonderful fêtes that followed the capture of Constantinople. The thirteenth century, as M. Lefébure points out, was conspicuous for an increased demand in the West for embroidery. Many Crusaders made offerings to churches of plunder from Palestine; and St. Louis, on his return from the first Crusade, offered thanks at St. Denis to God for mercies bestowed on him during his six years' absence and travel, and presented some richly embroidered stuffs to be used on great occasions as coverings to the reliquaries containing the relics of holy martyrs. European embroidery, having thus become possessed of new materials and wonderful methods, developed on its own intellectual and imitative lines, inclining, as it went on, to the purely pictorial, and seeking to rival painting, and to produce landscapes and figure subjects with elabo-

rate perspective and subtle aerial effects. A fresh Oriental influence, however, came through the Dutch and the Portuguese, and the famous *Compagnie des Grandes Indes;* and M. Lefébure gives an illustration of a door-hanging now in the Cluny Museum, where we find the French *fleurs-de-lis* intermixed with Indian ornament. The hangings of Madame de Maintenon's room at Fontainebleau, which were embroidered at St. Cyr, represent Chinese scenery upon a jonquil-yellow ground.

Clothes were sent out ready cut to the East to be embroidered, and many of the delightful coats of the period of Louis XV and Louis XVI owe their dainty decoration to the needles of Chinese artists. In our own day the influence of the East is strongly marked. Persia has sent us her carpets for patterns, and Cashmere her lovely shawls, and India her dainty muslins finely worked with gold thread palmates, and stitched over with iridescent beetles' wings. We are beginning now to dye by Oriental methods, and the silk robes of China and Japan have taught us new wonders of colour combination, and new subtleties of delicate design. Whether we have yet learned to make a wise use of what we have acquired is less certain. If books produce an effect, this book of M. Lefé-

bure should certainly make us study with still deeper interest the whole question of embroidery, and by those who already work with their needles it will be found full of most fertile suggestion and most admirable advice.

Even to read of the marvellous works of embroidery that were fashioned in bygone ages is pleasant. Time has kept a few fragments of Greek embroidery of the fourth century B.C. for us. One is figured in M. Lefébure's book—a chain-stitch embroidery of yellow flax upon a mulberry-coloured worsted material, with graceful spirals and palmetto patterns; and another, a tapestried cloth powdered with ducks, was reproduced in *The Woman's World* some months ago for an article by Mr. Alan Cole. Now and then we find in the tomb of some dead Egyptian a piece of delicate work. In the treasury at Ratisbon is preserved a specimen of Byzantine embroidery, on which the Emperor Constantine is depicted riding on a white palfrey, and receiving homage from the East and West. Metz has a red silk cope wrought with great eagles, the gift of Charlemagne, and Bayeux the needle-wrought epic of Queen Matilda. But where is the great crocus-coloured robe that was wrought for Athena, and on which the gods fought against

the giants? Where is the huge velarium that Nero stretched across the Colosseum at Rome, on which was represented the starry sky, and Apollo driving a chariot drawn by steeds? How one would like to see the curious table napkins wrought for Heliogabalus, on which were displayed all the dainties and viands that could be wanted for a feast; or the mortuary-cloth of King Chilperic, with its three hundred golden bees; or the fantastic robes that excited the indignation of the Bishop of Pontus, and were embroidered with "lions, panthers, bears, dogs, forests, rocks, hunters—all, in fact, that painters can copy from nature." Charles of Orleans had a coat, on the sleeves of which were embroidered the verses of a song, beginning, "Madame, je suis tout joyeux," the musical accompaniment of the words being wrought in gold thread, and each note (of square shape in those days) formed with four pearls. The room prepared in the palace at Rheims for the use of Queen Joan of Burgundy was decorated with "thirteen hundred and twenty-one *papegauts* (parrots) made in broidery and blazoned with the King's arms, and five hundred and sixty-one butterflies, whose wings were similarly ornamented with the Queen's arms—the whole worked in fine gold." Catherine

de Medicis had a mourning-bed made for her "of black velvet embroidered with pearls and powdered with crescents and suns." Its curtains were of damask, "with leafy wreaths and garlands figured upon a gold and silver ground, and fringed along the edges with broideries of pearls," and it stood in a room hung with rows of the Queen's devices in cut black velvet on cloth of silver. Louis XIV had gold-embroidered caryatides fifteen feet high in his apartment. The state bed of Sobieski, King of Poland, was made of Smyrna gold brocade embroidered in turquoises and pearls, with verses from the Koran; its supports were of silver-gilt, beautifully chased and profusely set with enamelled and jewelled medallions. He had taken it from the Turkish camp before Vienna, and the standard of Mahomet had stood under it. The Duchess de la Ferté wore a dress of reddish-brown velvet, the skirt of which, adjusted in graceful folds, was held up by big butterflies made of Dresden china; the front was a *tablier* of cloth of silver, upon which was embroidered an orchestra of musicians arranged in a pyramidal group, consisting of a series of six ranks of performers, with musical instruments wrought in raised needlework.

"Into the night go one and all," as Mr. Henley sings in his charming "Ballade of Dead Actors."

Many of the facts related about the embroiderers' guilds by M. Lefébure are also extremely interesting. Etienne Boileau, in his book of crafts, to which I have already alluded, tells us that a member of the guild was prohibited from using gold of less value than "eight sous (about 6s.) the skein; he was bound to use the best silk, and never to mix thread with silk, because that made the work false and bad." The test or trial piece prescribed for a worker who was the son of a master embroiderer was "a single figure, a sixth of the natural size, to be shaded in gold"; whilst one not the son of a master was required to produce "a complete incident with many figures." The book of crafts also mentions "cutters-out, and stencillers, and illuminators" amongst those employed in the industry of embroidery. In 1551 the Parisian Corporation of Embroiderers issued a notice that "for the future the colouring in representations of nude figures and faces should be done in three or four gradations of carnation-dyed silk, and not, as formerly, in white silks." During the fifteenth century every household of any position retained the services of an embroiderer by the year. The

preparation of colours also, whether for painting or for dyeing threads and textile fabrics, was a matter which, M. Lefébure points out, received close attention from the artists of the Middle Ages. Many undertook long journeys to obtain the more famous recipes, which they filed, subsequently adding to and correcting them as experience dictated. Nor were great artists above making and supplying designs for embroidery. Raphael made designs for Francis I, and Boucher for Louis XV; and in the Ambras collection at Vienna is a superb set of sacerdotal robes from designs by the brothers Van Eyck and their pupils. Early in the sixteenth century books of embroidery designs were produced, and their success was so great that in a few years French, German, Italian, Flemish, and English publishers spread broadcast books of design made by their best engravers. In the same century, in order to give the designers opportunity of studying directly from nature, Jean Robin opened a garden with conservatories, in which he cultivated strange varieties of plants, then but little known in our latitudes. The rich brocades and brocadelles of the time are characterised by the introduction of large flowery patterns, with pomegranates and other fruits with fine foliage.

The second part of M. Lefébure's book is devoted to the history of lace, and though some may not find it quite as interesting as the earlier portion, it will more than repay perusal; and those who still work in this delicate and fanciful art will find many valuable suggestions in it, as well as a large number of exceedingly beautiful designs. Compared to embroidery, lace seems comparatively modern. M. Lefébure and Mr. Alan Cole tell us that there is no reliable or documentary evidence to prove the existence of lace before the fifteenth century. Of course, in the East, light tissues, such as gauzes, muslins, and nets, were made at very early times, and were used as veils and scarfs, after the manner of subsequent laces, and women enriched them with some sort of embroidery, or varied the openness of them by here and there drawing out threads. The threads of fringes seem also to have been plaited and knotted together, and the borders of one of the many fashions of Roman toga were of open reticulated weaving. The Egyptian Museum at the Louvre has a curious network embellished with glass beads; and the monk Reginald, who took part in opening the tomb of St. Cuthbert at Durham in the twelfth century, writes that the saint's shroud had a fringe of linen threads

an inch long, surmounted by a border, "worked upon the threads," with representations of birds and pairs of beasts, there being between each such pair a branching tree, a survival of the palm of Zoroaster, to which I have before alluded. Our authors, however, do not in these examples recognise lace, the production of which involves more refined and artistic methods, and postulates a combination of skill and varied execution carried to a higher degree of perfection. Lace, as we know it, seems to have had its origin in the habit of embroidering linen. White embroidery on linen has, M. Lefébure remarks, a cold and monotonous aspect; that with coloured threads is brighter and gayer in effect, but is apt to fade in frequent washing; but white embroidery relieved by open spaces in, or shapes cut from, the linen ground, is possessed of an entirely new charm; and from a sense of this the birth may be traced of an art in the result of which happy contrasts are effected between ornamental details of close texture and others of openwork.

Soon, also, was suggested the idea that, instead of laboriously withdrawing threads from stout linen, it would be more convenient to introduce a needle-made pattern into an open net-work ground,

which was called a *lacis*. Of this kind of embroidery many specimens are extant. The Cluny Museum possesses a linen cap said to have belonged to Charles V; and an alb of linen drawn-thread work, supposed to have been made by Anne of Bohemia (1527), is preserved in the cathedral at Prague. Catherine de Medicis had a bed draped with squares of *réseuil*, or *lacis*, and it is recorded that "the girls and servants of her household consumed much time in making squares of *réseuil*." The interesting pattern-books for open-ground embroidery, of which the first was published in 1527 by Pierre Quinty, of Cologne, supply us with the means of tracing the stages in the transition from white thread embroidery to needle-point lace. We meet in them with a style of needlework which differs from the embroidery in not being wrought upon a stuff foundation. It is, in fact, true lace, done, as it were, "in the air," both ground and pattern being entirely produced by the lace-maker.

The elaborate use of lace in costume was, of course, largely stimulated by the fashion of wearing ruffs, and their companion cuffs or sleeves. Catherine de Medicis induced one Federic Vinciolo to come from Italy and make ruffs and gadrooned collars, the fashion of which he started in France;

and Henry III was so punctilious over his ruffs that he would iron and goffer his cuffs and collars himself rather than see their pleats limp and out of shape. The pattern-books also gave a great impulse to the art. M. Lefébure mentions German books with patterns of eagles, heraldic emblems, hunting scenes, and plants and leaves belonging to Northern vegetation; and Italian books, in which the *motifs* consist of oleander blossoms, and elegant wreaths and scrolls, landscapes with mythological scenes, and hunting episodes, less realistic than the Northern ones, and in which appear fauns, and nymphs, and amorini, shooting arrows. With regard to these patterns, M. Lefébure notices a curious fact. The oldest painting in which lace is depicted is that of a lady by Carpaccio, who died about 1523. The cuffs of the lady are edged with a narrow lace, the pattern of which reappears in Vecillio's "Corona," a book not published until 1591. This particular pattern was, therefore, in use at least eighty years before it got into circulation with other published patterns.

It was not, however, till the seventeenth century that lace acquired a really independent character and individuality, and M. Duplessis states that the

production of the more noteworthy of early laces owes more to the influence of men than to that of women. The reign of Louis XIV witnessed the production of the most stately needle-point laces, the transformation of Venetian point, and the growth of *Points d'Alençon, d'Argentan, de Bruxelles,* and *d'Angleterre.*

The King, aided by Colbert, determined to make France the centre, if possible, for lace manufacture, sending for this purpose both to Venice and to Flanders for workers. The studio of the Gobelins supplied designs. The dandies had their huge rabatos, or bands falling from beneath the chin over the breast, and great prelates, like Bossuet and Fenelon, wore their wonderful albs and rochets. It is related of a collar made at Venice for Louis XIV that the lace-workers, being unable to find sufficiently fine horsehair, employed some of their own hairs instead, in order to secure that marvellous delicacy of work which they aimed at producing.

In the eighteenth century, Venice, finding that laces of lighter texture were sought after, set herself to make rose-point; and at the Court of Louis XV the choice of lace was regulated by still more

elaborate etiquette. The Revolution, however, ruined many of the manufacturers. Alençon survived, and Napoleon encouraged it, and endeavoured to renew the old rules about the necessity of wearing point-lace at Court receptions. A wonderful piece of lace, powdered over with devices of bees, and costing 40,000 francs, was ordered. It was begun for the Empress Josephine, but in the course of its making her escutcheons were replaced by those of Marie Louise.

M. Lefébure concludes his interesting history by stating very clearly his attitude towards machine-made lace. "It would be an obvious loss to art," he says, "should the making of lace by hand become extinct, for machinery, as skilfully devised as possible, cannot do what the hand does. It can give us the results of processes, not the creations of artistic handicraft. Art is absent where formal calculation pretends to supersede emotion; it is absent where no trace can be detected of intelligence guiding handicraft, whose hesitancies even possess peculiar charm. Cheapness is never commendable in respect of things which are not absolute necessities; it lowers artistic standard." These are admirable remarks, and with them we take leave of this fascinating book, with its delightful illustra-

tions, its charming anecdotes, its excellent advice. Mr. Alan Cole deserves the thanks of all who are interested in art for bringing this book before the public in so attractive and so inexpensive a form.

A NOTE ON SOME MODERN POETS.

"If I were king," says Mr. Henley, in one of his most modest rondeaus,

> "Art should aspire, yet ugliness be dear;
> Beauty, the shaft, should speed with wit for feather;
> And love, sweet love, should never fall to sere,
> If I were king."

And these lines contain, if not the best criticism of his own work, certainly a very complete statement of his aim and motive as a poet. His little "Book of Verse" (David Nutt) reveals to us an artist who is seeking to find new methods of expression, and who has not merely a delicate sense of beauty and a brilliant, fantastic wit, but a real passion also for what is horrible, ugly, or grotesque. No doubt, everything that is worthy of existence is worthy also of art—at least, one would like to think so—but while echo or mirror can repeat for us a beautiful thing, to artistically render

a thing that is ugly requires the most exquisite alchemy of form, the most subtle magic of transformation. To me there is more of the cry of Marsyas than of the singing of Apollo in the earlier poems of Mr. Henley's volume, the "Rhymes and Rhythms in Hospital," as he calls them. But it is impossible to deny their power. Some of them are like bright, vivid pastels; others like charcoal drawings, with dull blacks and murky whites; others like etchings with deeply bitten lines, and abrupt contrasts, and clever colour-suggestions. In fact, they are like anything and everything, except perfected poems—that they certainly are not. They are still in the twilight. They are preludes, experiments, inspired jottings in a note-book and should be heralded by a design of "Genius Making Sketches." Rhyme gives architecture as well as melody to verse; it gives that delightful sense of limitation which in all the arts is so pleasurable, and is, indeed, one of the secrets of perfection; it will whisper, as a French critic has said, "things unexpected and charming, things with strange and remote relations to each other," and bind them together in indissoluble bonds of beauty; and in his constant rejection of rhyme, Mr. Henley seems to me to have abdicated half his

power. He is a *roi en exil,* who has thrown away some of the strings of his lute; a poet who has forgotten the fairest part of his kingdom.

However, all work criticises itself. Here is one of Mr. Henley's inspired jottings. According to the temperament of the reader, it will serve either as a model or as the reverse:—

"As with varnish red and glistening
Dripped his hair; his feet were rigid;
Raised, he settled stiffly sideways,
You could see the hurts were spinal.

"He had fallen from an engine,
And been dragged across the metals.
It was hopeless, and they knew it,
So they covered him and left him.

"As he lay, by fits half sentient,
Inarticulately moaning,
With his stockinged feet protruded
Sharp and awkward from the blankets,

"To his bed there came a woman;
Stood and looked, and sighed a little,
And departed without speaking,
As himself a few hours after.

"I was told she was his sweetheart.
They were on the eve of marriage.
She was quiet as a statue,
But her lip was gray and writhen."

In this poem, the rhythm and the music, such as it is, are obvious—perhaps a little too obvious. In the following I see nothing but ingeniously printed prose. It is a description—and a very accurate one—of a scene in a hospital ward. The medical students are supposed to be crowding round the doctor. What I quote is only a fragment, but the poem itself is a fragment:—

"So shows the ring
Seen, from behind, round a conjuror
Doing his pitch in the street.
High shoulders, low shoulders, broad shoulders,
narrow ones,
Round, square, and angular, serry and shove;
While from within a voice,
Gravely and weightily fluent,
Sounds; and then ceases; and suddenly
(Look at the stress of the shoulders!)
Out of a quiver of silence,
Over the hiss of the spray,

Comes a low cry, and the sound
Of breath quick intaken through teeth
Clenched in resolve. And the master
Breaks from the crowd, and goes,
Wiping his hands,
To the next bed, with his pupils
Flocking and whispering behind him.

"Now one can see.
Case Number One
Sits (rather pale) with his bedclothes
Stripped up, and showing his foot
(Alas, for God's image!)
Swaddled in wet white lint
Brilliantly hideous with red."

Théophile Gautier once said that Flaubert's style was meant to be read, and his own style to be looked at. Mr. Henley's unrhymed rhythms form very dainty designs, from a typographical point of view. From the point of view of literature, they are a series of vivid, concentrated impressions, with a keen grip of fact, a terrible actuality, and an almost masterly power of picturesque presentation. But the poetic form—what of that?

Well, let us pass to the later poems, to the rondels and rondeaus, the sonnets and quatorzains, the echoes and the ballades. How brilliant and fanciful this is! The Toyokuni colour-print that suggested it could not be more delightful. It seems to have kept all the wilful fantastic charm of the original:—

"Was I a Samurai renowned,
Two-sworded, fierce, immense of bow?
A histrion, angular, and profound?
A priest? a porter?—Child, although
I have forgotten clean, I know
That in the shade of Fujisan,
What time the cherry-orchards blow,
I loved you once in old Japan.

"As here you loiter, flowing-gowned
And hugely sashed, with pins a-row
Your quaint head as with flamelets crowned,
Demure, inviting—even so,
When merry maids in Miyako
To feel the sweet o' the year began,
And green gardens to overflow,
I loved you once in old Japan.

"Clear shine the hills; the rice-fields round
Two cranes are circling; sleepy and slow,
A blue canal the lake's blue bound
Breaks at the bamboo bridge; and, lo!
Touched with the sundown's spirit and glow,
I see you turn, with flirted fan,
Against the plum-tree's bloomy snow . . .
I loved you once in old Japan.

"Envoy.

"Dear, 'twas a dozen lives ago;
But that I was a lucky man
The Toyokuni here will show;
I loved you—once—in old Japan!"

This rondel, too—how light it is, and graceful!—

"We'll to the woods and gather may,
Fresh from the footprints of the rain;
We'll to the woods, at every vein
To drink the spirit of the day.

"The winds of spring are out at play,
The needs of spring in heart and brain.
We'll to the woods and gather may
Fresh from the footprints of the rain.

"The world's too near her end, you say?
Hark to the blackbird's mad refrain!
It waits for her, the vast Inane?
Then, girls, to help her on the way,
We'll to the woods and gather may."

There are fine verses, also, scattered through this little book; some of them very strong, as—

"Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

"It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul."

Others with a true touch of romance, as—

"Or ever the knightly years were gone
With the old world to the grave,
I was a King in Babylon,
And you were a Christian slave."

And here and there we come across such felicitous phrases as—

"In the sand
The gold prow-griffin claws a hold."

Or—

"The spires
Shine and are changed."

And many other graceful or fanciful lines, even "the green sky's minor thirds" being perfectly right in its place, and a very refreshing bit of affectation in a volume where there is so much that is natural.

However, Mr. Henley is not to be judged by samples. Indeed, the most attractive thing in the book is no single poem that is in it, but the strong humane personality that stands behind both flawless and faulty work alike, and looks out through many masks, some of them beautiful, and some grotesque, and not a few misshapen. In the case of most of our modern poets, when we have analysed them down to an adjective, we can go no further, or we care to go no further; but with this book it is different. Through these reeds and pipes blow the very breath of life. It seems as if

one could put one's hand upon the singer's heart and count its pulsations. There is something wholesome, virile, and sane about the man's soul. Anybody can be reasonable, but to be sane is not common; and sane poets are as rare as blue lilies, though they may not be quite so delightful.

"Let the great winds their worst and wildest blow,
Or the gold weather round us mellow slow;
We have fulfilled ourselves, and we can dare,
And we can conquer, though we may not share,
In the rich quiet of the afterglow,
What is to come,"

is the concluding stanza of the last rondeau—indeed, of the last poem in the collection, and the high, serene temper displayed in these lines serves at once as keynote and keystone to the book. The very lightness and slightness of so much of the work, its careless moods and casual fancies, seem to suggest a nature that is not primarily interested in art—a nature, like Sordello's, passionately enamoured of life, and to which lyre and lute are things of less importance. From this mere joy of living, this frank delight in experience for its own sake, this lofty indifference, and momentary unre-

gretted ardours, come all the faults and all the beauties of the volume. But there is this difference between them—the faults are deliberate and the result of much study; the beauties have the air of fascinating impromptus. Mr. Henley's healthy, if sometimes misapplied, confidence in the myriad suggestions of life gives him his charm. He is made to sing along the highways, not to sit down and write. If he took himself more seriously, his work would become trivial.

Mr. William Sharp takes himself very seriously, and has written a preface to his "Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy" (Walter Scott), which is, on the whole, the most interesting part of his volume. We are all, it seems, far too cultured and lack robustness. There are those amongst us, says Mr. Sharp, who would prefer a dexterously turned triolet to such apparently uncouth measures as "Thomas the Rhymer," or the ballad of "Clerk Saunders," and who "would rather listen to the drawing-room music of the Villanelle than to the wild harp-playing by the mill-dams o' Binnorie, or the sough of the night wind o'er drumly Allan water." Such an expression as "the drawing-room music of the Villanelle" is not very happy, and I

cannot imagine anyone with the smallest pretensions to culture preferring a dexterously turned triolet to a fine imaginative ballad, as it is only the Philistine who ever dreams of comparing works of art that are absolutely different in motive, in treatment, and in form. If English Poetry is in danger—and, according to Mr. Sharp, the poor nymph is in a very critical state—what she has to fear is not the fascination of dainty metre or delicate form, but the predominance of the intellectual spirit over the spirit of beauty. Lord Tennyson dethroned Wordsworth as a literary influence, and later on Mr. Swinburne filled all the mountain valleys with echoes of his own song. The influence to-day is that of Mr. Browning. And as for the triolets, and the rondels, and the careful study of metrical subtleties, these things are merely the signs of a desire for perfection in small things, and of the recognition of poetry as an art. They have had certainly one good result—they have made our minor poets readable, and have not left us entirely at the mercy of geniuses.

But, says Mr. Sharp, everyone is far too literary; even Rossetti is too literary. What we want is simplicity and directness of utterance; these should be the dominant characteristics of poetry.

Well, is that quite so certain? Are simplicity and directness of utterance absolute essentials for poetry? I think not. They may be admirable for the drama, admirable for all those imitative forms of literature that claim to mirror life in its externals and its accidents, admirable for quiet narrative, admirable in their place; but their place is not everywhere. Poetry has many modes of music; she does not blow through one pipe alone. Directness of utterance is good, but so is the subtle recasting of thought into a new and delightful form. Simplicity is good, but complexity, mystery, strangeness, symbolism, obscurity even, these have their value. Indeed, properly speaking, there is no such thing as Style; there are merely styles, that is all.

One cannot help feeling also that everything that Mr. Sharp says in his preface was said at the beginning of the century by Wordsworth, only where Wordsworth called us back to nature, Mr. Sharp invites us to woo romance. Romance, he tells us, is "in the air." A new romantic movement is imminent. "I anticipate," he says, "that many of our poets, especially those of the youngest generation, will shortly turn towards the ballad

as a poetic vehicle, and that the next year or two will see much romantic poetry."

The ballad! Well, Mr. Andrew Lang, some months ago, signed the death-warrant of the ballade, and—though I hope that in this respect Mr. Lang resembles the Queen in "Alice in Wonderland," whose bloodthirsty orders were by general consent never carried into execution—it must be admitted that the number of ballades given to us by some of our poets was, perhaps, a little excessive. But the ballad? "Sir Patrick Spens," "Clerk Saunders," "Thomas the Rhymer"—are these to be our archetypes, our models, the sources of our inspiration? They are certainly great imaginative poems. In Chatterton's "Ballad of Charity," Coleridge's "Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner," the "La Belle Dame sans Merci" of Keats, the "Sister Helen" of Rossetti, we can see what marvellous works of art the spirit of old romance may fashion. But to preach a spirit is one thing, to propose a form is another. It is true that Mr. Sharp warns the rising generation against imitation. A ballad, he reminds them, does not necessarily denote a poem in quatrains and in antique language. But his own poems, as I think will be seen later on, are, in their way, warnings

and show the danger of suggesting any definite "poetic vehicle." And further, are simplicity and directness of utterance really the dominant characteristics of these old imaginative ballads that Mr. Sharp so enthusiastically, and, in some particulars, so wisely praises? It does not seem to me to be so. We are always apt to think that the voices which sang at the dawn of poetry were simpler, fresher, and more natural than ours, and that the world which the early poets looked at, and through which they walked, had a kind of poetical quality of its own, and could pass, almost without changing, into song. The snow lies thick now upon Olympus, and its scarped sides are bleak and barren, but once, we fancy, the white feet of the Muses brushed the dew from the anemones in the morning, and at evening came Apollo to sing to the shepherds in the vale. But in this we are merely lending to other ages what we desire, or think we desire, for our own. Our historical sense is at fault. Every century that produces poetry is, so far, an artificial century, and the work that seems to us the most natural and simple product of its time is probably the result of the most deliberate and self-conscious effort. For Nature is always

behind the age. It takes a great artist to be thoroughly modern.

Let us turn to the poems, which have really only the preface to blame for their somewhat late appearance. The best is undoubtedly "The Weird of Michael Scott," and these stanzas are a fair example of its power:—

"Then Michael Scott laughed long and loud:
'Whan shone the mune ahint yon cloud
I speered the towers that saw my birth—
Lang, lang, sall wait my cauld grey shroud,
Lang cauld and weet my bed o' earth!'

"But as by Stair he rode full speed
His horse began to pant and bleed;
'Win hame, win hame, my bonnie mare,
Win hame if thou wouldst rest and feed,
Win hame, we're nigh the House of Stair!'

"But, with a shrill heart-bursten yell,
The white horse stumbled, plunged, and fell,
And loud a summoning voice arose,
'Is't White-Horse Death that rides frae Hell,
Or Michael Scott that hereby goes?'

"'Ah, Lord of Stair, I ken ye weel!
Avaunt, or I your saul sall steal,
An' send ye howling through the wood
A wild man-wolf—aye, ye maun reel
An' cry upon your Holy Rood!'"

There is a good deal of vigour, no doubt, in these lines; but one cannot help asking whether this is to be the common tongue of the future Renaissance of Romance. Are we all to talk Scotch and to speak of the moon as the "mune," and the soul as the "saul"? I hope not. And yet if this Renaissance is to be a vital, living thing, it must have its linguistic side. Just as the spiritual development of music, and the artistic development of painting, have always been accompanied, if not occasioned, by the discovery of some new instrument or some fresh medium, so, in the case of any important literary movement, half of its strength resides in its language. If it does not bring with it a rich and novel mode of expression, it is doomed either to sterility or to imitation. Dialect, archaisms, and the like, will not do. Take, for instance, another poem of Mr. Sharp's, a poem which he calls "The Deith-Tide":—

"The weet saut wind is blawing
Upon the misty shore;
As, like a stormy snawing,
The deid go streaming o'er:—
The wan drown'd deid sail wildly
Frae out each drumly wave:
It's O and O for the weary sea
And O for a quiet grave."

This is simply a very clever *pastiche,* nothing more, and our language is not likely to be permanently enriched by such words as "weet," "saut," "blawing," and "snawing." Even "drumly," an adjective of which Mr. Sharp is so fond that he uses it both in prose and verse, seems to me to be hardly an adequate basis for a new romantic movement.

However, Mr. Sharp does not always write in dialect. "The Song of Allan" can be read without any difficulty, and "Phantasy" can be read with pleasure. They are both very charming poems in their way, and none the less charming because the cadences of the one recall "Sister Helen," and the motive of the other reminds us of "La Belle Dame sans Merci." But those who wish to thoroughly enjoy Mr. Sharp's poems should not read

his preface; just as those who approve of the preface should avoid reading the poems. I cannot help saying that I think the preface a great mistake. The work that follows it is quite inadequate and there seems little use in heralding a dawn that rose long ago, and proclaiming a Renaissance whose first-fruits, if we are to judge them by any high standard of perfection, are of so ordinary a character.

Miss Mary Robinson has also written a preface to her little volume—"Poems, Ballads, and a Garden Play" (T. Fisher Unwin)—but the preface is not very serious and does not propose any drastic change or any immediate revolution in English literature. Miss Robinson's poems have always the charm of delicate music and graceful expression; but they are, perhaps, weakest where they try to be strong, and certainly least satisfying where they seek to satisfy. Her fanciful flower-crowned Muse, with her tripping steps and pretty, wilful ways, should not write Antiphons to the Unknowable, or try to grapple with abstract intellectual problems. Hers is not the hand to unveil mysteries, nor hers the strength for the solving of secrets. She should never leave her garden, and as

for her wandering out into the desert to ask the Sphinx questions, that should be sternly forbidden to her. Durer's "Melancolia," that serves as the frontispiece to this dainty book, looks sadly out of place. Her seat is with the sibyls, not with the nymphs. What has she to do with shepherdesses piping about Darwinism and "The Eternal Mind"?

However, if the "Songs of the Inner Life" are not very successful, the "Spring Songs" are delightful. They follow each other like wind-blown petals, and make one feel how much more charming flower is than fruit, apple-blossom than apple. There are some artistic temperaments that should never come to maturity, that should always remain in the region of promise, and that should dread autumn with its harvesting more than winter with its frosts. Such seems to me the temperament that this volume reveals. The first poem of the second series, "La Belle au Bois Dormant," is worth all the more serious and thoughtful work, and has far more chance of being remembered. It is not always to high aim and lofty ambition that the prize is given. If Daphne had gone to meet Apollo, she would never have known what laurels are.

From these fascinating spring lyries and idylls we pass to the romantie ballads. One artistie faculty Miss Robinson eertainly possesses—the faculty of imitation. There is an element of imitation in all the arts; it is to be found in literature as much as in painting, and the danger of valuing it too little is almost as great as the danger of setting too high a value upon it. To catch, by dainty mimiery, the very mood and manner of antique work and yet to retain that touch of modern passion without whieh the old form would be dull and empty; to win from long-silent lips some faint eeho of their music, and to add to it a music of one's own; to take the mode and fashion of a bygone age, and to experiment with it, and seareh curiously for its possibilities; there is a pleasure in all this. It is a kind of literary acting, and has something of the eharm of the art of the stage-player. And how well, on the whole, Miss Robinson does it! Here is the opening of the ballad of Rudel:

"There was in all the world of Franee
No singer half so sweet:
The first note of his viol brought
A crowd into the street.

"He stepped as young, and bright, and glad
As Angel Gabriel.
And only when we heard him sing
Our eyes forgot Rudel.

"And as he sat in Avignon,
With princes at their wine,
In all that lusty company
Was none so fresh and fine.

"His kirtle's of the Arras-blue,
His cap of pearls and green;
His golden curls fall tumbling round
The fairest face I've seen."

How Gautier would have liked this from the same poem!—

"Hew the timbers of sandal-wood,
And planks of ivory;
Rear up the shining masts of gold,
And let us put to sea.

"Sew the sails with a silken thread
That all are silken too;
Sew them with scarlet pomegranates
Upon a sheet of blue.

"Rig the ship with a rope of gold
And let us put to sea.
And now, good-bye to good Marseilles,
And hey for Tripoli!"

The ballad of the Duke of Gueldres' wedding is very clever:—

"'O welcome, Mary Harcourt,
Thrice welcome, lady mine;
There's not a knight in all the world
Shall be as true as thine.

"'There's venison in the aumbry, Mary,
There's claret in the vat;
Come in, and breakfast in the hall
Where once my mother sat!'

"O red, red is the wine that flows,
And sweet the minstrel's play,
But white is Mary Harcourt
Upon her wedding-day.

"O many are the wedding guests
That sit on either side;
But pale below her crimson flowers
And homesick is the bride."

Miss Robinson's critical sense is at once too sound and too subtle to allow her to think that any great Renaissance of Romance will necessarily follow from the adoption of the ballad-form in poetry; but her work in this style is very pretty and charming, and "The Tower of St. Maur," which tells of the father who built up his little son in the wall of his castle in order that the foundations should stand sure, is admirable in its way. The few touches of archaism in language that she introduces are quite sufficient for their purpose, and though she fully appreciates the importance of the Celtic spirit in literature, she does not consider it necessary to talk of "blawing" and "snawing." As for the garden play, "Our Lady of the Broken Heart," as it is called, the bright, bird-like snatches of song that break in here and there —as the singing does in "Pippa Passes"—form a very welcome relief to the somewhat ordinary movement of the blank verse and suggests to us again where Miss Robinson's real power lies. Not a poet in the true creative sense, she is still a very perfect artist in poetry, using language as one might use a very precious material, and producing her best work by the rejection of the great themes and large intellectual motives that belong to fuller

and richer song. When she essays such themes, she certainly fails. Her instrument is the reed, not the lyre. Only those should sing of Death whose song is stronger than Death is.

The collected poems of the author of "John Halifax, Gentleman" (Macmillan and Co.), have a pathetic interest as the artistic record of a very gracious and comely life. They bring us back to the days when Philip Bourke Marston was young —"Philip, my King," as she called him in the pretty poem of that name; to the days of the Great Exhibition, with the universal piping about peace; to those later terrible Crimean days, when Alma and Balaclava were words on the lips of our poets; and to days when Leonora was considered a very romantic name.

"Leonora, Leonora,
How the word rolls—*Leonora.*
Lion-like in full-mouthed sound,
Marching o'er the metric ground,
With a tawny tread sublime.
So your name moves, Leonora,
Down my desert rhyme."

Mrs. Craik's best poems are, on the whole, those that are written in blank verse; and these, though not prosaic, remind one that prose was her true medium of expression. But some of the rhymed poems have considerable merit. These may serve as examples of Mrs. Craik's style:—

"A SKETCH.

"Dost thou thus love me, O thou all beloved,
In whose large store the very meanest coin
Would out-buy my whole wealth? Yet here thou comest
Like a kind heiress from her purple and down
Uprising, who for pity cannot sleep,
But goes forth to the stranger at her gate—
The beggared stranger at her beauteous gate—
And clothes and feeds; scarce blest till she has blest.

"But dost thou love me, O thou pure of heart,
Whose very looks are prayers? What couldst thou see
In this forsaken pool by the yew-wood's side,
To sit down at its bank, and dip thy hand,
Saying, 'It is so clear!'—and lo! ere long,
Its blackness caught the shimmer of thy wings,

Its slimes slid downward from thy stainless palm,
Its depths grew still, that there thy form might
rise."

"THE NOVICE.

"It is near morning. Ere the next night fall
I shall be made the bride of heaven. Then home
To my still marriage-chamber I shall come,
And spouseless, childless, watch the slow years
crawl.

"These lips will never meet a softer touch
Than the stone crucifix I kiss; no child
Will clasp this neck. Ah, virgin-mother mild,
Thy painted bliss will mock me overmuch.

"This is the last time I shall twist the hair
My mother's hand wreathed, till in dust she
lay:
The name, her name given on my baptism day,
This is the last time I shall ever bear.

"O weary world, O heavy life, farewell!
Like a tired child that creeps into the dark
To sob itself asleep, where none will mark,—
So creep I to my silent convent cell.

"Friends, lovers whom I loved not, kindly hearts
Who grieve that I should enter this still door,
Grieve not. Closing behind me evermore,
Me from all anguish, as all joy, it parts."

The volume chronicles the moods of a sweet and thoughtful nature, and though many things in it may seem somewhat old-fashioned, it is still very pleasant to read, and has a faint perfume of withered rose-leaves about it.

SOME LITERARY NOTES.

In a recent article on English poetesses, I ventured to suggest that our women of letters should turn their attention somewhat more to prose, and somewhat less to poetry. Women seem to me to possess just what our literature wants—a light touch, a delicate hand, a graceful mode of treatment, and an unstudied felicity of phrase. We want someone who will do for our prose what Mme. de Sévigné did for the prose of France. George Eliot's style was far too cumbrous, and Charlotte Brontë's too exaggerated. However, one must not forget that amongst the women of England there have been some charming letter-writers, and certainly no book can be more delightful reading than Mrs. Ross's "Three Generations of Englishwomen" (John Murray), which has recently appeared. The three Englishwomen whose memoirs and correspondence Mrs. Ross has so admirably edited are Mrs. John Taylor, Mrs. Sarah Austin, and Lady Duff Gordon, all of them remarkable

personalities, and two of them women of brilliant wit and European reputation. Mrs. Taylor belonged to that great Norwich family about whom the Duke of Sussex remarked that they reversed the ordinary saying that it takes nine tailors to make a man, and was for many years one of the most distinguished figures in the famous society of her native town. Her only daughter married John Austin, the great authority on jurisprudence, and her *salon* in Paris was the centre of the intellect and culture of her day. Lucie Duff Gordon, the only child of John and Sarah Austin, inherited the talents of her parents. A beauty, *a femme d'esprit,* a traveller, and clever writer, she charmed and fascinated her age, and her premature death in Egypt was really a loss to our literature. It is to her daughter that we owe this delightful volume of memoirs.

First we are introduced to Mrs. Ross's great-grandmother, Mrs. Taylor, who was called by her intimate friends the "Madame Roland of Norwich," from her likeness to the portraits of the handsome and unfortunate Frenchwoman. We hear of her darning her boy's grey worsted stockings while holding her own with Southey and Brougham, and dancing round the Tree of Liberty

with Dr. Parr when the news of the fall of the Bastille was first known. Amongst her friends were Sir James Mackintosh, the most popular man of the day, to whom Mme. de Staël wrote: *"Il n'y à pas de société sans vous." "C'est très ennuyeux de dîner sans vous; la société ne va pas quand vous n'êtes pas là"*; Sir James Smith, the botanist; Crabb Robinson; the Gurneys; Mrs. Barbauld; Dr. Alderson and his charming daughter, Amelia Opie; and many other well-known people. Her letters are extremely sensible and thoughtful. "Nothing at present," she says in one of them, "suits my taste so well as Susan's Latin lessons, and her philosophical old master. When we get to Cicero's discussions on the nature of the soul, or Virgil's fine descriptions, my mind is filled up. Life is either a dull round of eating, drinking, and sleeping, or a spark of ethereal fire just kindled. . . . . The character of girls must depend upon their reading as much as upon the company they keep. Besides the intrinsic pleasure to be derived from solid knowledge, a woman ought to consider it as her best resource against poverty." This is a somewhat caustic aphorism: "A romantic woman is a troublesome friend, as she expects you to be as imprudent as herself and is mortified at what

she calls coldness and insensibility." And this is admirable: "The art of life is not to estrange oneself from society, and yet not to pay too dear for it." This, too, is good: "Vanity, like curiosity, is wanted as a stimulus to exertion; indolence would certainly get the better of us if it were not for these two powerful principles"; and there is a keen touch of humour in the following: "Nothing is so gratifying as the idea that virtue and philanthropy are becoming fashionable." Dr. James Martineau, in a letter to Mrs. Ross, gives us a pleasant picture of the old lady returning from market "weighted by her huge basket, with the shank of a leg of mutton thrust out to betray its contents," and talking divinely about philosophy, poets, politics, and every intellectual topic of the day. She was a woman of admirable good sense, a type of Roman matron, and quite as careful as were the Roman matrons to keep up the purity of her native tongue.

Mrs. Taylor, however, was more or less limited to Norwich. Mrs. Austin was for the world. In London, Paris, and Germany, she ruled and dominated society, loved by everyone who knew her. She is "My best and my brightest" to Lord Jeffrey; "Dear, fair, and wise," to Sydney Smith;

"My great ally" to Sir James Stephen; "Sunlight through waste weltering chaos" to Thomas Carlyle (while he needed her aid); *"La petite mère du genre humain"* to Michael Chevalier; *"Liebes Mütterlein"* to John Stuart Mill; and "My own Professoress" to Charles Buller, to whom she taught German, as well as to the sons of Mr. James Mill. Jeremy Bentham, when on his deathbed, gave her a ring with his portrait and some of his hair let in behind. "There, my dear," he said, "it is the only ring I ever gave a woman." She corresponded with Guizot, Barthelemy de St. Hilaire, the Grotes, Dr. Whewell, the Master of Trinity, Nassau Senior, the Duchesse d'Orléans, Victor Cousin, and many other distinguished people. Her translation of Ranke's "History of the Popes" is admirable; indeed, all her literary work was thoroughly well done, and her edition of her husband's "Province of Jurisprudence" deserves the very highest praise. Two people more unlike than herself and her husband it would have been difficult to find. He was habitually grave and despondent; she was brilliantly handsome, fond of society, in which she shone, and "with an almost superabundance of energy and animal spirits," Mrs. Ross tells us. She married him because she thought him

perfect, but he never produced the work of which he was worthy, and of which she knew him to be worthy. Her estimate of him in the preface to the "Jurisprudence" is wonderfully striking and simple: "He was never sanguine. He was intolerant of any imperfection. He was always under the control of severe love of truth. He lived and died a poor man." She was terribly disappointed in him, but she loved him. Some years after his death, she wrote to M. Guizot:—

"In the intervals of my studies of his works I read his letters to me—*forty-five years of love-letters*—the last as tender and as passionate as the first. And how full of noble sentiments. The midday of our lives was clouded and stormy, full of cares and disappointments; but the sunset was bright and serene—as bright as the morning, and more serene. Now it is night with me, and must remain so till the dawn of another day. I am always alone—that is, *I live with him.*"

The most interesting letters in the book are certainly those to M. Guizot, with whom she maintained the closest intellectual friendship; but there is hardly one of them that does not contain something clever, or thoughtful, or witty, while those

addressed to her, in turn, are very interesting. Carlyle writes her letters full of lamentations, the wail of a Titan in pain, superbly exaggerated for literary effect:

"Literature, one's sole craft and staff of life, lies broken in abeyance; what room for music amid the braying of innumerable jackasses, the howling of innumerable hyænas whetting the tooth to eat them up! Alas for it! It is a sick, disjointed time; neither shall we ever mend it; at best, let us hope to mend ourselves. I declare I sometimes think of throwing down the pen altogether as a worthless weapon, and leading out a colony of these poor, starving drudges to the waste places of their old Mother Earth, where for sweat of their brow bread *will* rise for them; it were, perhaps, the worthiest service that at this moment could be rendered our old world to throw open for it the doors of the new. Thither must they come at last; bursts of eloquence will do nothing; men are starving, and will try many things before they die. But poor I—*ach Gott!* I am no Hengist or Alaric; only a writer of articles in bad prose. Stick to thy last, O Tutor; the pen is not

worthless; it is omnipotent to those who have Faith."

Henri Beyle (Stendhal), the great, I am often tempted to think the greatest of French novelists, writes her a charming letter about *nuances*. "It seems to me," he says, "that, except when they read Shakespeare, Byron, or Sterne, no Englishman understands *nuances;* we adore them. A fool says to a woman, 'I love you'; the words mean nothing. He might as well say, 'Olli Batachor'; it is the *nuance* which gives force to the meaning." In 1839 Mrs. Austin writes to Victor Cousin: "I have seen young Gladstone, a distinguished Tory, who wants to re-establish education based on the Church in quite a Catholic form"; and we find her corresponding with Mr. Gladstone on the subject of education. "If you are strong enough to provide motives and checks," she says to him, "you may do two blessed acts—reform your clergy and teach your people. As it is, how few of them conceive what it is to teach a people!" Mr. Gladstone replies at great length, and in many letters, from which we may quote this passage:

"You are for pressing and urging the people to their profit against their inclinations: so am I.

You set little value upon all merely technical instruction, upon all that fails to touch the inner nature of man: so do I. And here I find ground of union broad and deep-laid.

"But I more than doubt whether your idea, namely, that of raising man to social sufficiency and morality, can be accomplished, except through the ancient religion of Christ; or whether the principles of eclecticism are legitimately applicable to the Gospel; or whether, if we find ourselves in a state of incapacity to work through the Church, we can remedy the defect by the adoption of principles contrary to hers.

"But, indeed, I am most unfit to pursue the subject; private circumstances of no common interest are upon me, as I have become very recently engaged to Miss Catharine Glynne, and I hope your recollection will enable you in some degree to excuse me."

Lord Jeffrey has a very curious and suggestive letter on popular education, in which he denies, or at least doubts, the effect of this education on morals. He, however, supports it on the ground "that it will increase the enjoyment of individuals," which is certainly a very sensible claim.

Humboldt writes to her about an old Indian language which was preserved by a parrot, the tribe who spoke it having been exterminated, and about "young Darwin," who had just published his first book. Here are some extracts from her own letters:

"I heard from Lord Lansdowne two or three days ago. I think he is *ce que nous avons de mieux.* He wants only the energy that great ambition gives. He says, 'We shall have a Parliament of railway kings.' What can be worse than that?—the deification of money by a whole people. As Lord Brougham says, we have no right to give ourselves Pharisaical airs. I must give you a story sent to me. Mrs. Hudson, the railway queen, was shown a bust of Marcus Aurelius at Lord Westminster's, on which she said, 'I suppose that is not the present marquis.' To *goûter* this, you must know that the extreme vulgar (hackney coachmen, etc.) in England pronounce 'marquis' very like 'marcus.'"

"Dec. 17th.—Went to Savigny's. Nobody was there but W. Grimm and his wife, and a few men. Grimm told me that he had received two volumes

of Norwegian fairy tales, and that they were delightful. Talking of them, I said, 'Your children appear to be the happiest in the world; they live in the midst of fairy tales.' 'Ah,' said he, 'I must tell you about that. When we were at Göttingen, somebody spoke to my little son about his father's *Märchen*. He had read them, but never thought about their being mine. He came running to me, and said, with an offended air, "Father, they say you wrote those fairy tales; surely you never invented such silly rubbish." He thought it below my dignity.'"

"Savigny told a *Volksmärchen:*

"St. Anselm was grown old and infirm, and lay on the ground among thorns and thistles. *Der liebe Gott* said to him, 'You are very badly lodged there; why don't you build yourself a house?' 'Before I take the trouble,' said Anselm, 'I should like to know how long I have to live.' 'About thirty years,' said *Der liebe Gott.* 'Oh, for so short a time,' replied he, 'it's not worth while,' and turned himself round among the thistles.

"Dr. Franck told me a story of which I had never heard before. Voltaire had, for some reason or other, taken a grudge against the prophet Ha-

bakkuk, and affected to find in him things he never wrote. Somebody took the Bible and began to demonstrate to him that he was mistaken. *'C'est égal,'* he said, impatiently, *'Habakkuk était capable de tout!'* "

"October 30, 1853.

"I am not in love with the tendencies of our modern novelists. There is abundance of talent, but writing a pretty, graceful, touching, yet pleasing story is the last thing our writers nowadays think of; their novels are partly pamphlets on political or social questions, like 'Sybil,' or 'Alton Locke,' or 'Mary Barton,' or 'Uncle Tom'; or they are the most minute and painful dissections of the least agreeable and beautiful parts of our nature, like those of Miss Brontë—'Jane Eyre' and 'Villette'; or they are a kind of martyrology, like Mrs. Marsh's 'Emilia Wyndham,' which makes you almost doubt whether any torments the heroine would have earned by being naughty could exceed those she incurred by her virtue.

"Where, oh, where is the charming, humane, gentle spirit that dictated 'The Vicar of Wakefield'—the spirit which Goethe so justly calls *versöhnend* (reconciling), with all the weaknesses

and woes of humanity? Have you read Thackeray's 'Esmond'? It is a curious and very successful attempt to imitate the style of our old novelists. Which of Mrs. Gore's novels are translated? They are very clever, lively, worldly, bitter, disagreeable, and entertaining. Miss Austen's—are they translated? They are not new, and are Dutch paintings of every-day people—very clever, very true, very unæsthetic, but amusing. I have not seen 'Ruth,' by Mrs. Gaskell. I hear it much admired and blamed. It is one of the many proofs of the desire women have now to *friser* questionable topics, and to *poser* insoluble moral problems. George Sand has turned their heads in that direction. I think a few broad scenes or hearty jokes *à la* Fielding were very harmless in comparison. They *confounded* nothing. . . . The 'Heir of Redcliffe' I have not read. I am not worthy of superhuman flights of virtue—in a novel. I want to see how people act and suffer who are as good-for-nothing as I am myself. Then I have the sinful pretension to be amused, whereas all our novelists want to reform us, and to show us what a hideous place this world is: *ma foi, je ne le sais que trop,* without their help.

"The 'Head of the Family' has some merits.

But there is too much affliction, and misery, and frenzy. The heroine is one of those creatures, now so common (in novels), who remind me of a poor bird tied to a stake (as was once the cruel sport of boys) to be 'shyed' at (*i. e.*, pelted) till it died; only our gentle lady writers at the end of all untie the poor, battered bird, and assure us that it is never the worse for all the blows it has had—nay, the better—and that now, with its broken wings and torn feathers, and bruised body, it is going to be quite happy. No, fair ladies, you know that it is not so—*resigned,* if you please, but make me no shams of happiness out of such wrecks."

In politics, Mrs. Austin was a philosophical Tory. Radicalism she detested, and she and most of her friends seem to have regarded it as moribund. "The Radical party is evidently effete," she writes to M. Victor Cousin; "the probable leader of the Tory party is Mr. Gladstone." "The people must be instructed, must be guided, must be, in short, governed," she writes elsewhere; and in a letter to Dr. Whewell she says: "The state of things in France fills me with the deepest anxiety on one point, the point on which the permanency of our institutions and our salvation as a nation

turn. Are our higher classes able to keep the lead of the rest? If they are, we are safe; if not, I agree with my poor, dear Charles Buller—our turn must come. Now Cambridge and Oxford must really look to this." The belief in the power of the universities to stem the current of democracy is charming. She grew to regard Carlyle as "one of the dissolvents of the age—as mischievous as his extravagances will let him be"; speaks of Kingsley and Maurice as "pernicious"; and talks of John Stuart Mill as a "demagogue." She was no *doctrinaire*. "One ounce of education demanded is worth a pound imposed. It is no use to give the meat before you give the hunger." She was delighted at a letter of St. Hilaire's, in which he said, "We have a system and no results; you have results and no system." Yet she had a deep sympathy with the wants of the people. She was horrified at something Babbage told her of the population of some of the manufacturing towns, who are *worked out* before they attain to thirty years of age. "But I am persuaded the remedy will not come from the people," she adds. Many of her letters are concerned with the question of the higher education of women. She discusses Buckle's lecture on "The Influence of Women

upon the Progress of Knowledge," admits to M. Guizot that woman's intellectual life is largely coloured by the emotions, but adds: "One is not precisely a fool because one's opinions are greatly influenced by one's affections. The opinions of men are often influenced by worse things." Dr. Whewell consults her about lecturing women on Plato, being slightly afraid lest people should think it ridiculous; Comte writes her elaborate letters on the relation of women to progress; and Mr. Gladstone promises that Mrs. Gladstone will carry out at Hawarden the suggestions contained in one of her pamphlets. She was always very practical, and never lost her admiration for plain sewing.

All through the book we come across interesting and amusing things. She gets St. Hilaire to order a large, sensible bonnet for her in Paris, which was at once christened the "Aristotelian," and was supposed to be the only useful bonnet in England. Grote has to leave Paris after the *coup d'état,* he tells her, because he cannot bear to see the establishment of a Greek tyrant. Alfred de Vigny, Macaulay, John Stirling, Southey, Alexis de Tocqueville, Hallam, and Jean Jacques Ampère all contribute to these pleasant pages. She seems

to have inspired the warmest feelings of friendship in those who knew her. Guizot writes to her: "Madame de Staël used to say that the best thing in the world was a serious Frenchman. I turn the compliment, and say that the best thing in the world is an affectionate Englishman. How much more an Englishwoman? Given equal qualities, a woman is always more charming than a man."

Lucie Austin, afterwards Lady Duff Gordon, was born in 1821. Her chief playfellow was John Stuart Mill, and Jeremy Bentham's garden was her playground. She was a lovely, romantic child, who was always wanting the flowers to talk to her, and used to invent the most wonderful stories about animals, of whom she was passionately fond. In 1834 Mrs. Austin decided on leaving England, and Sydney Smith wrote his immortal letter to the little girl:

"Lucie, Lucie, my dear child, don't tear your frock; tearing frocks is not of itself a proof of genius. But write as your mother writes, act as your mother acts: be frank, loyal, affectionate, simple, honest, and then integrity or laceration

of frock is of little import. And, Lucie, dear child, mind your arithmetic. You know in the first sum of yours I ever saw there was a mistake. You had carried two (as a cab is licensed to do), and you ought, dear Lucie, to have carried but one. Is this a trifle? What would life be without arithmetic but a scene of horrors? You are going to Boulogne, the city of debts, peopled by men who have never understood arithmetic. By the time you return I shall probably have received my first paralytic stroke, and shall have lost all recollection of you. Therefore, I now give you my parting advice—don't marry anybody who has not a tolerable understanding, and a thousand a year. And God bless you, dear child."

At Boulogne she sat next Heine at *table d'hôte*. "He heard me speak German to my mother, and soon began to speak to me, and then said: 'When you go back to England, you can tell your friends that you have seen Heinrich Heine.' I replied, 'And who is Heinrich Heine?' He laughed heartily, and took no offence at my ignorance; and we used to lounge on the end of the pier together, where he told me stories in which fish, mermaids, water-sprites, and a very funny old French fiddler,

with a poodle, were mixed up in the most fanciful manner, sometimes humorous, and very often pathetic, especially when the water-sprites brought him greetings from the 'Nord See.' He was so kind to me, and so sarcastic to every one else." Twenty years afterwards the little girl whose "braune Augen" Heine had celebrated in his charming poem, "Wenn ich an deinem Hause," used to go and see the dying poet in Paris. "It does one good," he said to her, "to see a woman who does not carry about a broken heart, to be mended by all sorts of men, like the women here, who do not see that a total want of heart is their real failing." On another occasion he said to her: "I have now made peace with the whole world, and at last also with God, who sends thee to me as a beautiful angel of death. I shall certainly soon die." Lady Duff Gordon said to him: "Poor poet, do you still retain such splendid illusions, that you transform a travelling Englishwoman into Azrael? That used not to be the case, for you always disliked us." He answered: "Yes, I do not know what possessed me to dislike the English. It was only petulance. I never hated them; indeed, I never knew them. I was only once in England, but knew no one; and found

London very dreary, and the people and the streets odious. But England has revenged herself well; she has sent me two excellent friends—thyself and Milnes, that good Milnes."

There are delightful letters from Dicky Doyle here, with the most amusing drawings, one of the present Sir Robert Peel as he made his maiden speech in the House being excellent; and the various descriptions of Hassan's performances are extremely amusing. Hassan was a black boy, who had been turned away by his master because he was going blind, and was found by Lady Duff Gordon one night sitting on her doorstep. She took care of him, and had him cured, and he seems to have been a constant source of delight to every one. On one occasion, when Prince Louis Napoleon (the late Emperor of the French) came in unexpectedly, he gravely said: "Please, my lady, I ran out and bought two-pennyworth of sprats for the Prince, and for the honour of the house." Here is an amusing letter from Mrs. Norton:

"My dear Lucie: We have never thanked you for the *red pots,* which no early Christian should be without, and which add that finishing stroke to the splendour of our demesne, which was supposed

to depend on a roc's egg in less intelligent times. We have now a warm *Pompeian* appearance, and the constant contemplation of these classical objects favour the beauty of the facial line; for what can be deduced from the great fact, apparent in all the states of antiquity, that *straight noses* were the ancient custom, but the logical assumption that the constant habit of turning up the nose at unsightly objects—such as the National Gallery and other offensive and obtrusive things—has produced the modern divergence from the true and proper line of profile? I rejoice to think that we ourselves are exempt. I attribute this to our love of Pompeian Pots (on account of the beauty and distinction of this Pot's shape I spell it with a big P), which has kept us straight in a world of crookedness. The pursuit of profiles under difficulties —how much more rare than a pursuit of knowledge! Talk of setting good examples before our children! Bah! let us set good Pompeian Pots before our children, and when they grow up they will not depart from them."

Lady Duff Gordon's "Letters from the Cape," and her brilliant translation of "The Amber Witch," are, of course, well known. The latter

book was, with Lady Wilde's translation of "Sidonia the Sorceress," my favourite romantic reading when a boy. Her letters from Egypt are wonderfully vivid and picturesque. Here is an interesting bit of art criticism:

"Shereef Yoosuf laughed heartily over a print in an illustrated paper from a picture of Hilton's 'Rebekah at the Well,' with the old 'Vakeel' of Sidi Ibraheem (Abraham's chief servant) kneeling before the girl he was sent to fetch, like an old fool, without his turban, and Rebekah and the other girls in queer fancy dresses, and the camels with snouts like pigs. 'If the painter could not go into Sena to see how the Arab really looks,' said Sheykh Yoosuf, 'why did he not paint a well in England, with girls like English peasants? At least it would have looked natural to English people, and the Vakeel would not seem so like a madman if he had taken off a hat.' I cordially agree with Yoosuf's art criticism. *Fancy* pictures of Eastern things are hopelessly absurd."

Mrs. Ross has certainly produced a most fascinating volume, and her book is one of the books of the season. It is edited with tact and judgment.

"Caroline" (Richard Bentley & Son), by Lady Lindsay, is certainly Lady Lindsay's best work. It is written in a very clever modern style, and is as full of *esprit* and wit as it is of subtle psychological insight. Caroline is an heiress, who, coming downstairs at a Continental hotel, falls into the arms of a charming, penniless young man. The hero of the novel is the young man's friend, Lord Lexamont, who makes the "great renunciation," and succeeds in being fine without being priggish, and Quixotic without being ridiculous. Miss Ffoulkes, the elderly spinster, is a capital character, and, indeed, the whole book is cleverly written. It has also the advantage of being in only one volume. The influence of Mudie on literature, the baneful influence of the circulating library, is clearly on the wane. The gain to literature is incalculable. English novels were becoming very tedious with their three volumes of padding—at least, the second volume was always padding—and extremely indigestible. A reckless punster once remarked to me, *apropos* of English novels, that "the proof of the padding is in the eating," and certainly English fiction has been very heavy—heavy with the best intentions. Lady Lindsay's

book is a sign that better things are in store for us. She is brief and bright.

What are the best books to give as Christmas presents to good girls who are always pretty, or to pretty girls who are occasionally good? People are so fond of giving away what they do not want themselves, that charity is largely on the increase. But with this kind of charity I have not much sympathy. If one gives away a book, it should be a charming book—so charming, that one regrets having given it, and would not take it back. Looking over the Christmas books sent to me by various publishers, I find that these are the best and the most pleasing: "Gleanings from the *Graphic*," by Randolph Caldicott (George Routledge & Sons), a most fascinating volume full of sketches that have real wit and humour of line, and are not simply dependent on what the French call the *légende*, the literary explanation; "Meg's Friend" (Blackie & Sons), by Alice Corkran, one of our most delicate and graceful prose-writers in the sphere of fiction, and one whose work has the rare artistic qualities of refinement and simplicity; "Under False Colours" (Blackie & Sons), by Sarah Dowdney, an excellent story; "The Fisher-

man's Daughter" (Hatchards), by Florence Montgomery, the author of "Misunderstood," a tale with real charm of idea and treatment; "Under a Cloud" (Hatchards), by the author of "The Atelier du Lys," and quite worthy of its author; "The Third Miss St. Quentin" (Hatchards), by Mrs. Molesworth, and "A Christmas Posy" (Macmillan & Co.), from the same fascinating pen, and with delightful illustrations by Walter Crane. Miss Rosa Mulholland's "Giannetta" (Blackie & Sons) and Miss Agnes Giberne's "Ralph Hardcastle's Will" (Hatchards) are also admirable books for presents, and the bound volume of "Atalanta" has much that is delightful both in art and in literature.

The prettiest, indeed the most beautiful, book, from an artistic point of view, is undoubtedly Mr. Walter Crane's "Flora's Feast" (Cassell & Co.). It is an imaginative Masque of Flowers, and as lovely in colour as it is exquisite in design. It shows us the whole pomp and pageant of the year: the Snowdrops like white-crested knights, the little naked Crocus kneeling to catch the sunlight in his golden chalice, the Daffodils blowing their trumpets like young hunters, the Anemones with their wind-blown raiment, the green-kirtled Marsh-

marigolds, and the "Lady-smocks all silver-white," tripping over the meadows like Arcadian milk-maids. Buttercups are here, and the white-plumed Thorn in spiky armour, and the Crown-imperial borne in stately procession, and red-bannered Tulips, and Hyacinths with their spring bells, and Chaucer's Daisy—

> ——"small and sweet,
> Si douce est la Marguerite."

Gorgeous Peonies, and Columbines "that drew the car of Venus," and the Rose with her lover, and the stately white-vestured Lilies, and wide-staring Ox-eyes, and scarlet Poppies pass before us. There are Primroses and Corncockles, Chrysanthemums in robes of rich brocade, Sunflowers and tall Hollyhocks, and pale Christmas Roses. The designs for the Daffodils, the wild Roses, the Convolvulvi, and the Hollyhocks are admirable, and would be beautiful in embroidery or in any precious material. Indeed, anyone who wishes to find beautiful designs cannot do better than get the book. It is, in its way, a little masterpiece, and its grace and fancy, and beauty of line and colour, cannot be over-estimated. The Greeks gave human form

to wood and stream, and saw Nature best in Naiad or in Dryad. Mr. Crane, with something of Gothic fantasy, has caught the Greek feeling, the love of personification, the passion for representing things under the conditions of the human form. The flowers are to him so many knights and ladies, page-boys or shepherd-boys, divine nymphs or simple girls, and in their fair bodies or fanciful raiment one can see the flower's very form and absolute essence, so that one loves their artistic truth no less than their artistic beauty. This book contains some of the best work Mr. Crane has ever done. His art is never so successful as when it is entirely remote from life. The slightest touch of actuality seems to kill it. It lives, or should live, in a world of its own fashioning. It is decorative in its complete subordination of fact to beauty of effect, in the grandeur of its curves and lines, in its entirely imaginative treatment. Almost every page of this book gives a suggestion for some rich tapestry, some fine screen, some painted *cassone,* some carving in wood or ivory.

From Messrs. Hildesheimer and Faulkner I have received a large collection of Christmas cards and illustrated books. One of the latter, an *édi-*

tion de luxe of Sheridan's "Here's to the Maiden of Bashful Fifteen," is very cleverly illustrated by Miss Alice Havers and Mr. Ernest Wilson. It seems to me, however, that there is a danger of modern illustration becoming too pictorial. What we need is good book ornament, decorative ornament that will go with type and printing, and give to each page a harmony and unity of effect. Merely dotting a page with reproductions of water-colour drawings will not do. It is true that Japanese art, which is essentially decorative, is pictorial also. But the Japanese have the most wonderful delicacy of touch, and with a science so subtle that it gives the effect of exquisite accident, they can by mere placing make an undecorated space decorative. There is also an intimate connection between their art and their handwriting or printed characters. They both go together, and show the same feeling for form and line. Our aim should be to discover some mode of illustration that will harmonise with the shapes of our letters. At present there is a discord between our pictorial illustrations and our unpictorial type. The former are too essentially imitative in character, and often disturb a page instead of decorating it. However, I suppose we must regard most of these

Christmas books as merely books of pictures, with a running accompaniment of explanatory text. As the text, as a rule, consists of poetry, this is putting the poet in a very subordinate position; but the poetry in the books of this kind is not, as a rule, of a very high order of excellence.

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"The various collectors of Irish folk-lore," says Mr. W. B. Yeats in his charming little book "Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry" (Walter Scott), "have, from our point of view, one great merit, and, from the point of view of others, one great fault. They have made their work literature rather than science, and told us of the Irish peasantry rather than of the primitive history of mankind, or whatever else the folklorists are on the gad after. To be considered scientists they should have tabulated all their tales in forms like grocers' bills—item the fairy king, item the fairy queen. Instead of this they have caught the very voice of the people, the very pulse of life, each giving what was most noticed in his day. Croker and Lover, full of the ideas of the harum-scarum Irish gentility, saw everything humourised. The impulse of the Irish literature of their time came from a class that did not—mainly

for political reasons—take the populace seriously, and imagined the country as a humourist's Arcadia; of its passion, its gloom, its tragedy, they knew nothing. What they did was not wholly false; they merely magnified an irresponsible type, found oftenest among boatmen, carmen, and gentlemen's servants, into the type of a whole nation, and created a stage Irishman. The writings of 'Forty-eight and the Famine, combined, burst their bubble. Their work had the dash as well as the shallowness of an ascendant and idle class; and, in Croker, is touched everywhere with beauty, a gentle Arcadian beauty. Carleton, a peasant born, has in many of his stories, more especially in his ghost stories, a much more serious way with him, for all his humour. Kennedy, an old bookseller in Dublin, who seems to have had something of genuine belief in the fairies, comes next in time. He has far less literary faculty, but is wonderfully accurate, giving often the very words in which the stories were told. But the best book since Croker is Lady Wilde's 'Ancient Legends.' The humour has all given way to pathos and tenderness. We have here the innermost heart of the Celt in the moments he has grown to love through years of persecution, when, cushioning

himself about with dreams, and hearing fairy songs in the twilight, he ponders on the soul and on the dead. Here is the Celt, only it is the Celt dreaming."

Into a volume of very moderate dimensions, and of extremely moderate price, Mr. Yeats has collected together the most characteristic of our Irish folklore stories, grouping them together according to subject. First come the "Trooping Fairies." The peasants say that these are fallen angels who were not good enough to be saved, nor bad enough to be lost; but the Irish antiquarians see in them the gods of Pagan Ireland, who, when no longer worshipped or fed with offerings, dwindled away in the popular imagination, and are now only a few spans in height. Their chief occupations are feasting, fighting, making love, and playing the most beautiful music. They have only one industrious person among them, the *Leprachaun* (the Little Shoemaker). It is his duty to repair their shoes when they wear them out with dancing. Mr. Yeats tells us that near the village of Ballisodare is an old woman who lived among them for seven years. When she came home she had no toes; she had danced them all off. On May Eve, every

seventh year, they fight for the harvest, for the best ears of grain belong to them. An old man informed Mr. Yeats that he saw them fight once, and that they tore the thatch off a house. Had any one else been near they would merely have seen a great wind whirling everything into the air as it passed. When the wind drives the leaves and straws before it, that is the fairies, and the peasants take off their hats and say "God bless them." When they are gay, they sing. Many of the most beautiful tunes of Ireland are only their music caught up by eavesdroppers. No prudent peasant would hum "The Pretty Girl Milking the Cow" near a fairy rath, for they are jealous, and do not like to hear their songs in clumsy mortal life. Blake once saw a fairy's funeral. But this, as Mr. Yeats points out, must have been an English fairy, for the Irish fairies never die; they are immortal.

Then come the "Solitary Fairies"; amongst them we find the little *Leprachaun* mentioned above. He has grown very rich, as he possesses all the treasure crocks buried in war time. In the early part of this century, according to Croker, they used to show in Tipperary a little shoe forgotten by the fairy shoemaker. Then there are

two rather disreputable little fairies—the *Cluricaun*, who gets intoxicated in gentlemen's cellars, and "The Red Man," who plays unkind practical jokes. The *Fear-Gorta* (Man of Hunger) is an emaciated phantom who goes through the land in time of famine, begging an alms, and bringing good luck to the giver. The *Water-Sheerie* is own brother to the English Jack-o'-lantern. The *Leanhaun Shee* (Fairy Mistress) seeks the love of mortals. If they refuse, she must be their slave; if they consent, they are hers, and can only escape by finding another to take their place. The fairy lives on their life, and they waste away. Death is no escape from her. She is the Gaelic Muse, for she gives inspiration to those she persecutes. The Gaelic poets die young, for she is restless, and will not let them remain long on earth. The *Pooka* is essentially an animal spirit, and some have considered him the forefather of Shakespeare's "Puck." He lives on solitary mountains, and among old ruins "grown monstrous with much solitude," and is of the race of the nightmare. He has many shapes—is now a horse, now a goat, now an eagle. Like all spirits, he is only half in the world of form. The Banshee does not care much for our democratic levelling tendencies; she only loves old

families, and despises the *parvenu* or the *nouveau riche*. When more than one Banshee is present, and they wail and sing in chorus, it is for the death of some holy or great one. An omen that sometimes accompanies the Banshee is an immense black coach, mounted by a coffin, and drawn by headless horses driven by a *Dullahan*. A *Dullahan* is the most terrible thing in the world. In 1807 two of the sentries stationed outside St. James's Park saw one climbing the railings, and died of fright. Mr. Yeats suggests that they are possibly descended from that Irish giant who swam across the Channel with his head in his teeth.

Then come the stories of ghosts, of saints and priests, and of giants. The ghosts live in a state intermediary between this world and the next. They are held there by some earthly longing or affection, or some duty unfulfilled, or anger against the living; they are those who are too good for hell and too bad for heaven. Sometimes they take the form of insects, especially that of butterflies. The author of "The Parochial Survey of Ireland" heard a woman say to a child, who was chasing a butterfly, "How do you know it is not the soul of your grandfather?" On November Eve they are abroad, and dance with the fairies. As for the

saints and priests, there are no martyrs in the stories. That ancient chronicler, Giraldus Cambrensis, taunted the Archbishop of Cashel because no one in Ireland had received the crown of martyrdom. "Our people may be barbarous," the prelate answered, "but they have never lifted their hands against God's saints; but now that a people have come amongst us who know how to make them" (it was just after the English invasion) "we shall have martyrs plentifully." The giants were the old Pagan heroes of Ireland, who grew bigger and bigger, just as the gods grew smaller and smaller. The fact is, they did not wait for offerings; they took them *vi et armis*.

Some of the prettiest stories are those that cluster round *Tir-nán-Og*. This is the Country of the Young, "for age and death have not found it, neither tears nor loud laughter have gone near it." One man has gone there and returned. The bard Oisin—who wandered away on a white horse, moving on the surface of the foam with his fairy Niamh—lived there 300 years, and then returned in search of his comrades. The moment his foot touched the earth his 300 years fell on him, and he was bowed double, and his beard swept the ground. He described his sojourn in the Land of

Youth to St. Patrick before he died. Since then, according to Mr. Yeats, "many have seen it in many places; some in the depths of lakes, and have heard rising therefrom a vague sound of bells; more have seen it far off on the horizon, as they peered out from the western cliffs. Not three years ago a fisherman imagined that he saw it."

Mr. Yeats has certainly done his work very well. He has shown great critical capacity in his selection of the stories, and his little introductions are charmingly written. It is delightful to come across a collection of purely imaginative work, and Mr. Yeats has a very quick instinct in finding out the best and most beautiful things in Irish folklore. I am also glad to see that he has not confined himself entirely to prose, but has included Allingham's lovely poem on the fairies:

"Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We dare not go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping altogether;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather.

"Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home;
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam;
Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs
All night awake.

"High on the hill-top
The old king sits,
He is now so old and grey
He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
Columkill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses;
Or going up with music,
On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights."

All lovers of fairy tales and folklore should get this little book. "The Horned Woman," "The Priest's Soul," and "Teig O'Kane," are really marvellous in their way; and, indeed, there is hardly

a single story that is not worth reading and thinking over.

The wittiest writer in France at present is a woman. That clever, that *spirituelle grande dame,* who has adopted the pseudonym of "Gyp," has in her own country no rival. Her wit, her delicate and delightful *esprit,* her fascinating modernity, and her light, happy touch, give her a unique position in that literary movement which has taken for its object the reproduction of contemporary life. Such books as "Autour du Mariage," "Autour du Divorce," and "Le Petit Bob," are, in their way, little playful masterpieces, and the only work in England that we could compare with them is Violet Fane's "Edwin and Angelina Papers." To the same brilliant pen which gave us these wise and witty studies of modern life we owe now a more serious, more elaborate production. "Helen Davenant" (Chapman & Hall) is as earnestly wrought out as it is cleverly conceived. If it has a fault, it is that it is too full of matter. Out of the same material a more economical writer would have made two novels and half a dozen psychological studies for publication in American magazines. Thackeray once met Bishop Wilberforce

at dinner at Dean Stanley's, and, after listening to the eloquent prelate's extraordinary flow and fund of stories, remarked to his neighbour, "I could not afford to spend at that rate." Violet Fane is certainly lavishly extravagant of incident, plot, and character. But we must not quarrel with richness of subject-matter at a time when tenuity of purpose and meagreness of motive seem to be becoming the dominant notes of contemporary fiction. The side issues of the story are so complex that it is difficult, almost impossible, to describe the plot in any adequate manner. The interest centres round a young girl, Helen Davenant by name, who contracts a private and clandestine marriage with one of those mysterious and fascinating foreign noblemen who are becoming so invaluable to writers of fiction, either in narrative or dramatic form. Shortly after the marriage her husband is arrested for a terrible murder committed some years before in Russia, under the evil influence of occult magic and mesmerism. The crime was done in a hypnotic state, and, as described by Violet Fane, seems much more probable than the actual hypnotic experiments recorded in scientific publications. This is the supreme advantage that fiction possesses over fact. It can

make things artistically probable; can call for imaginative and realistic credence; can, by force of mere style, compel us to believe. The ordinary novelists, by keeping close to the ordinary incidents of commonplace life, seem to me to abdicate half their power. Romance, at any rate, welcomes what is wonderful; the temper of wonder is part of her own secret; she loves what is strange and curious. But besides the marvels of occultism and hypnotism there are many other things in "Helen Davenant" that are worthy of study. Violet Fane writes an admirable style. The opening chapter of the book, with its terrible poignant tragedy, is most powerfully written, and I cannot help wondering that the clever authoress cared to abandon, even for a moment, the superb psychological opportunity that this chapter affords. The touches of nature, the vivid sketches of high life, the subtle renderings of the phases and fancies of society, are also admirably done. "Helen Davenant" is certainly clever, and shows that Violet Fane can write prose that is as good as her verse, and can look at life not merely from the point of view of the poet, but also from the standpoint of the philosopher, the keen observer, the fine social critic. To be a fine social critic is no small thing, and

to be able to incorporate in a work of fiction the results of such careful observation is to achieve what is out of the reach of many. The difficulty under which the novelists of our day labour seems to me to be this: if they do not go into society, their books are unreadable; and if they do go into society, they have no time left for writing. However, Violet Fane has solved the problem.

"The chronicles which I am about to present to the reader are not the result of any conscious effort of the imagination. They are, as the title-page indicates, records of dreams occurring at intervals during the last ten years, and transcribed, pretty nearly in the order of their occurrence, from my diary. Written down as soon as possible after awaking from the slumber during which they presented themselves, these narratives, necessarily unstudied in style, and wanting in elegance of diction, have at least the merit of fresh and vivid colour; for they were committed to paper at a moment when the effect and impress of each successive vision were strong and forceful on the mind. . . .

"The most remarkable features of the experiences I am about to record are the methodical con-

secutiveness of their sequences, and the intelligent purpose disclosed alike in the events witnessed and in the words heard or read. . . . I know of no parallel to this phenomenon, unless in the pages of Bulwer Lytton's romance entitled 'The Pilgrims of the Rhine,' in which is related the story of a German student endowed with so marvellous a faculty of dreaming that for him the normal conditions of sleeping and waking became reversed; his true life was that which he lived in his slumbers, and his hours of wakefulness appeared to him as so many uneventful and inactive intervals of arrest, occurring in an existence of intense and vivid interest which was wholly passed in the hypnotic state. . . .

"During the whole period covered by these dreams I have been busily and almost continuously engrossed with scientific and literary pursuits, demanding accurate judgment and complete self-possession and rectitude of mind. At the time when many of the most vivid and remarkable visions occurred, I was following my course as a student at the Paris Faculty of Medicine, preparing for examinations, daily visiting hospital wards as dresser, and attending lectures. Later, when I had taken my degree, I was engaged in the duties

of my profession and in writing for the press on scientific subjects. Neither had I ever taken opium, haschish, or other dream-producing agent. A cup of tea or coffee represents the extent of my indulgences in this direction. I mention these details in order to guard against inferences which might otherwise be drawn as to the genesis of my faculty.

"It may, perhaps, be worthy of notice that by far the larger number of the dreams set down in this volume occurred towards dawn; sometimes, even, after sunrise, during a 'second sleep.' A condition of fasting, united possibly with some subtle magnetic or other atmospheric state, seems, therefore, to be that most open to impressions of the kind."

This is the account given by the late Dr. Anna Kingsford of the genesis of her remarkable volume, "Dreams and Dream-Stories" (George Redway); and certainly some of the stories, especially those entitled "Steepside," "Beyond the Sunset," and "The Village of Seers," are well worth reading, though not intrinsically finer, either in motive or idea, than the general run of magazine stories. No one who had the privilege of knowing

Mrs. Kingsford, who was one of the brilliant women of our day, can doubt for a single moment that these tales came to her in the way she describes; but to me the result is just a little disappointing. Perhaps, however, I expect too much. There is no reason whatsoever why the imagination should be finer in hours of dreaming than it is in hours of waking. Mrs. Kingsford quotes a letter written by Jamblichus to Agathocles, in which he says: "The soul has a two-fold life, a lower and a higher. In sleep the soul is liberated from the constraint of the body, and enters, as an emancipated being, on its divine life of intelligence. The nobler part of the mind is thus united by abstraction to higher natures, and becomes a participant in the wisdom and foreknowledge of the gods. . . . The night-time of the body is the daytime of the soul." But the great masterpieces of literature and the great secrets of wisdom have not been communicated in this way; and even in Coleridge's case, though "Kubla Khan" is wonderful, it is not more wonderful, while it is certainly less complete, than "The Ancient Mariner."

As for the dreams themselves, which occupy the first portion of the book, their value, of course, depends chiefly on the value of the truths or pre-

dictions which they are supposed to impart. I must confess that most modern mysticism seems to me to be simply a method of imparting useless knowledge in a form that no one can understand. Allegory, parable, and vision have their high artistic uses, but their philosophical and scientific uses are very small. However, here is one of Mrs. Kingsford's dreams. It has a pleasant quaintness about it:—

"THE WONDERFUL SPECTACLES.

"I was walking alone on the sea-shore. The day was singularly clear and sunny. Inland lay the most beautiful landscape ever seen; and far off were ranges of tall hills, the highest peaks of which were white with glittering snows. Along the sands by the sea came towards me a man accoutred as a postman. He gave me a letter. It was from you. It ran thus:—

" 'I have got hold of the earliest and most precious book extant. It was written before the world began. The text is easy enough to read; but the notes, which are very copious and numerous, are in such minute and obscure characters that I cannot make them out. I want you to get for me the

spectacles which Swedenborg used to wear; not the smaller pair—those he gave to Hans Christian Andersen—but the large pair, and these seem to have got mislaid. I think they are Spinoza's make. You know, he was an optical-glass maker by profession, and the best we ever had. See if you can get them for me.'

"When I looked up after reading this letter I saw the postman hastening away across the sands, and I cried out to him, 'Stop! how am I to send the answer? Will you not wait for it?'

"He looked round, stopped, and came back to me.

" 'I have the answer here,' he said, tapping his letterbag, 'and I shall deliver it immediately.'

" 'How can you have the answer before I have written it?' I asked. 'You are making a mistake.'

" 'No,' he said. 'In the city from which I come the replies are all written at the office, and sent out with the letters themselves. Your reply is in my bag.'

" 'Let me see it,' I said. He took another letter from his wallet, and gave it to me. I opened it, and read, in my own handwriting, this answer, addressed to you:—

" 'The spectacles you want can be bought in

London; but you will not be able to use them at once, for they have not been worn for many years, and they sadly want cleaning. This you will not be able to do yourself in London, because it is too dark there to see well, and because your fingers are not small enough to clean them properly. Bring them here to me, and I will do it for you.'

"I gave this letter back to the postman. He smiled and nodded at me; and then I perceived, to my astonishment, that he wore a camel's-hair tunic round his waist. I had been on the point of addressing him—I know not why—as *Hermes*. But I now saw that he must be John the Baptist; and in my fright at having spoken to so great a Saint I awoke."

Mr. Maitland, who edits the present volume, and who was joint-author with Mrs. Kingsford of that curious book, "The Perfect Way," states in a foot-note that in the present instance the dreamer knew nothing of Spinoza at the time, and was quite unaware that he was an optician; and the interpretation of the dream, as given by him, is that the spectacles in question were intended to represent Mrs. Kingsford's remarkable faculty of intuitional and interpretative perception. For a spiritual mes-

sage fraught with such meaning, the mere form of this dream seems to me somewhat ignoble, and I cannot say that I like the blending of the postman with St. John the Baptist. However, from a psychological point of view, these dreams are interesting, and Mrs. Kingsford's book is undoubtedly a valuable addition to the literature of the mysticism of the nineteenth century.

"The Romance of a Shop" (T. Fisher Unwin), by Miss Amy Levy, is a more mundane book, and deals with the adventures of some young ladies who open a photographic studio in Baker Street, to the horror of some of their fashionable relatives. It is so brightly and pleasantly written that the sudden introduction of a tragedy into it seems violent and unnecessary. It lacks the true tragic temper, and without this temper in literature all misfortunes and miseries seem somewhat mean and ordinary. With this exception the book is admirably done, and the style is clever and full of quick observation. Observation is perhaps the most valuable faculty for a writer of fiction. When novelists reflect and moralise, they are, as a rule, dull. But to observe life with keen vision and quick intellect, to catch its many modes of expression, to seize

upon the subtlety, or satire, or dramatic quality of its situations, and to render life for us with some spirit of distinction and fine selection—this, I fancy, should be the aim of the modern realistic novelist. It would be, perhaps, too much to say that Miss Levy has distinction; this is the rarest quality in modern literature, though not only a few of its masters are modern; but she has many other qualities which are admirable.

"Faithful and Unfaithful" (Macmillan and Co.) is a powerful but not very pleasing novel. However, the object of most modern fiction is not to give pleasure to the artistic instinct, but rather to vividly portray life for us, to draw attention to social anomalies and social forms of injustice. Many of our novelists are really pamphleteers, reformers masquerading as story-tellers, earnest sociologists seeking to mend as well as to mirror life. The heroine, or rather martyr, of Miss Margaret Lee's story is a very noble and graciously Puritanic American girl, who is married at the age of eighteen to a man whom she insists on regarding as a hero. Her husband cannot live in the high rarefied atmosphere of idealism with which she surrounds him; her firm and fearless faith in him

becomes a factor in his degradation. "You are too good for me," he says to her in a finely conceived scene at the end of the book; "we have not an idea, an inclination, or a passion in common. I'm sick and tired of seeming to live up to a standard that is entirely beyond my reach and my desire. We make each other miserable! I can't pull you down and for ten years you have been exhausting yourself in vain efforts to raise me to your level. The thing must end!" He asks her to divorce him, but she refuses. He then abandons her, and availing himself of those curious facilities for breaking the marriage-tie that prevail in the United States, succeeds in divorcing her without her consent, and without her knowledge. The book is certainly characteristic of an age so practical and so literary as ours, an age in which all social reforms have been preceded and have been largely influenced by fiction. "Faithful and Unfaithful" seems to point to some coming change in the marriage laws of America.

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Miss Nesbit has already made herself a name as a writer of graceful and charming verse, and though her last volume, "Leaves of Life" (Long-

mans, Green, and Co.), does not show any distinct advance on her former work, it still fully maintains the high standard already achieved, and justifies the reputation of the author. There are some wonderfully pretty poems in it, poems full of quick touches of fancy, and of pleasant ripples of rhyme; and here and there a poignant note of passion flashes across the song, as a scarlet thread flashes through the shuttle-race of a loom, giving a new value to the delicate tints, and bringing the scheme of colour to a higher and more perfect key. In Miss Nesbit's earlier volume, the "Lays and Legends," as it was called, there was an attempt to give poetic form to humanitarian dreams and socialistic aspirations; but the poems that dealt with these subjects were, on the whole, the least successful of the collection; and with the quick, critical instinct of an artist, Miss Nesbit seems to have recognised this. In the present volume, at any rate, such poems are rare, and these few felicitous verses give us the poet's defence:

"A singer sings of rights and wrongs,
  Of world's ideals vast and bright,
And feels the impotence of songs
  To scourge the wrong or help the right;

And only writhes to feel how vain
  Are songs as weapons for his fight;
And so he turns to love again,
  And sings of love for heart's delight.

"For heart's delight the singers bind
  The wreath of roses round the head,
And will not loose it lest they find
  Time victor, and the roses dead.
'Man can but sing of what he knows—
  I saw the roses fresh and red!'
And so they sing the deathless rose,
  With withered roses garlanded.

"And some within their bosom hide
  Their rose of love still fresh and fair,
And walk in silence, satisfied
  To keep its folded fragrance rare.
And some—who bear a flag unfurled—
  Wreathe with their rose the flag they bear,
And sing their banner for the world,
  And for their heart the roses there.

"Yet thus much choice in singing is;
  We sing the good, the true, the just,
Passionate duty turned to bliss,
  And honour growing out of trust.

Freedom we sing, and would not lose
  Her lightest footprint in life's dust.
We sing of her because we choose,
  We sing of love because we must."

Certainly Miss Nesbit is at her best when she sings of love and nature. Here she is close to her subject, and her temperament gives colour and form to the various dramatic moods that are either suggested by Nature herself or brought to Nature for interpretation. This, for instance, is very sweet and graceful:—

"When all the skies with snow were grey,
  And all the earth with snow was white,
I wandered down a still wood way,
  And there I met my heart's delight
Slow moving through the silent wood,
The spirit of its solitude:
  The brown birds and the lichened tree
  Seemed less a part of it than she.

"Where pheasants' feet and rabbits' feet
  Had marked the snow with traces small,
I saw the footprints of my sweet—
  The sweetest woodland thing of all.

With Christmas roses in her hand,
One heart-beat's space I saw her stand;
And then I let her pass, and stood
Lone in an empty world of wood.

"And though by that same path I've passed
Down that same woodland every day,
That meeting was the first and last,
And she is hopelessly away.
I wonder was she really there—
Her hands, and eyes, and lips, and hair?
Or was it but my dreaming sent
Her image down the way I went?

"Empty the woods are where we met—
They will be empty in the spring;
The cowslip and the violet
Will die without her gathering.
But dare I dream one radiant day
Red rose-wreathed she will pass this way
Across the glad and honoured grass;
And then—I will not let her pass."

And this Dedication, with its tender silver-grey notes of colour, is charming:—

"In any meadow where your feet may tread,
In any garland that your love may wear,
May be the flower whose hidden fragrance shed
Wakes some old hope or numbs some old despair,
And makes life's grief not quite so hard to bear
And makes life's joy more poignant and more dear
Because of some delight dead many a year.

"Or in some cottage garden there may be
The flower whose scent is memory for you;
The sturdy southern-wood, the frail sweet-pea,
Bring back the swallow's cheep, the pigeon's coo,
And youth, and hope, and all the dreams they knew,
The evening star, the hedges grey with mist,
The silent porch where Love's first kiss was kissed.

"So in my garden may you chance to find
Or royal rose or quiet meadow flower,
Whose scent may be with some dear dream entwined,
And give you back the ghost of some sweet hour,
As lilies fragrant from an August shower,

Or airs of June that over bean-fields blow,
Bring back the sweetness of my long ago."

All through the volume we find the same dexterous refining of old themes, which is indeed the best thing that our lesser singers can give us, and a thing always delightful. There is no garden so well tilled but it can bear another blossom, and though the subject-matter of Miss Nesbit's book is as the subject-matter of almost all books of poetry, she can certainly lend a new grace and a subtle sweetness to almost everything she writes on.

"The Wanderings of Oisin, and other Poems" (Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co.) is from the clever pen of Mr. W. B. Yeats, whose charming anthology of Irish fairy-tales I had occasion to notice in a recent number of "The Woman's World." It is, I believe, the first volume of poems that Mr. Yeats has published, and it is certainly full of promise. It must be admitted that many of the poems are too fragmentary, too incomplete. They read like stray scenes out of unfinished plays, like things only half remembered, or, at best, but dimly seen. But the architectonic power of construction, the power to build up and make perfect a harmonious

whole, is nearly always the latest, as it certainly is the highest, development of the artistic temperament. It is somewhat unfair to expect it in early work. One quality Mr. Yeats has in a marked degree, a quality that is not common in the work of our minor poets, and is therefore all the more welcome to us—I mean the romantic temper. He is essentially Celtic, and his verse, at its best, is Celtic also. Strongly influenced by Keats, he seems to study how to "load every rift with ore," yet is more fascinated by the beauty of words than by the beauty of metrical music. The spirit that dominates the whole book is perhaps more valuable than any individual poem or particular passage; but this from "The Wanderings of Oisin" is worth quoting. It describes the ride to the Island of Forgetfulness:—

"And the ears of the horse went sinking away in
the hollow light,
For, as drift from a sailor slow drowning the
gleams of the world and the sun,
Ceased on our hands and faces, on hazel and oak
leaf, the light,
And the stars were blotted above us, and the
whole of the world was one;

"Till the horse gave a whinny; for cumbrous with
stems of the hazel and oak,
Of hollies, and hazels, and oak-trees, a valley
was sloping away
From his hoofs in the heavy grasses, with mon-
strous slumbering folk,
Their mighty and naked and gleaming bodies
heaped loose where they lay.

"More comely than man may make them, inlaid
with silver and gold,
Were arrow and shield and war-axe, arrow and
spear and blade,
And dew-blanched horns, in whose hollows a
child of three years old
Could sleep on a couch of rushes, round and
about them laid."

And this, which deals with the old legend of the city lying under the waters of a lake, is strange and interesting:—

"The Maker of the stars and worlds
Sat underneath the market cross,
And the old men were walking, walking,
And little boys played pitch-and-toss.

"'The props,' said He, 'of stars and worlds
Are prayers of patient men and good.'
The boys, the women, and old men,
Listening, upon their shadows stood.

"A grey professor passing cried,
'How few the mind's intemperance rule!
What shallow thoughts about deep things!
The world grows old and plays the fool.'

"The mayor came, leaning his left ear—
There was some talking of the poor—
And to himself cried, 'Communist!'
And hurried to the guardhouse door.

"The bishop came with open book,
Whispering along the sunny path;
There was some talking of man's God,
His God of stupor and of wrath.

"The bishop murmured, 'Atheist!
How sinfully the wicked scoff!'
And sent the old men on their way,
And drove the boys and women off.

"The place was empty now of people;
A cock came by upon his toes;
An old horse looked across the fence,
And rubbed along the rail his nose.

"The Maker of the stars and worlds
To His own house did Him betake,
And on that city dropped a tear,
And now that city is a lake."

Mr. Yeats has a great deal of invention, and some of the poems in his book, such as "Mosada," "Jealousy," and "The Island of Statues," are very finely conceived. It is impossible to doubt, after reading his present volume, that he will some day give us work of high import. Up to this he has been merely trying the strings of his instrument, running over the keys.

Lady Munster's "Dorinda" (Hurst and Blackett) is an exceedingly clever novel. The heroine is a sort of well-born Becky Sharp, only much more beautiful than Becky, or at least than Thackeray's portraits of her, which, however, have always seemed to me rather ill-natured. I feel sure that

Mrs. Rawdon Crawley was extremely pretty, and I have never understood how it was that Thackeray could caricature with his pencil so fascinating a creation of his pen. In the first chapter of Lady Munster's novel we find Dorinda at a fashionable school, and the sketches of the three old ladies who preside over the select seminary are very amusing. Dorinda is not very popular, and grave suspicions rest upon her of having stolen a cheque. This is a startling *début* for a heroine, and I was a little afraid at first that Dorinda, after undergoing endless humiliations, would be proved innocent in the last chapter. It was quite a relief to find that Dorinda was guilty. In fact, Dorinda is a kleptomaniac; that is to say, she is a member of the upper classes, who spends her time in collecting works of art that do not belong to her. This, however, is only one of her accomplishments, and it does not occupy any important place in the story till the last volume is reached. Here we find Dorinda married to a Styrian Prince, and living in the luxury for which she had always longed. Unfortunately, while staying in the house of a friend she is detected stealing some rare enamels. Her punishment, as described by Lady Munster, is extremely severe; and when she finally commits

suicide, maddened by the imprisonment to which her husband had subjected her, it is difficult not to feel a good deal of pity for her. Lady Munster writes a very clever, bright style, and has a wonderful faculty of drawing in a few sentences the most life-like portraits of social types and social exceptions. Sir Jasper Broke and his sister, the Duke and Duchess of Cheviotdale, Lord and Lady Glenalmond, and Lord Baltimore, are all admirably drawn. The "novel of high life," as it used to be called, has of late years fallen into disrepute. Instead of duchesses in Mayfair, we have philanthropic young ladies in Whitechapel; and the fashionable and brilliant young dandies, in whom Disraeli and Bulwer Lytton took such delight, have been entirely wiped out as heroes of fiction by hard-working curates in the East End. The aim of most of our modern novelists seems to be, not to write good novels, but to write novels that will do good; and I am afraid that they are under the impression that fashionable life is not an edifying subject. They wish to reform the morals, rather than to portray the manners of their age. They have made the novel the mode of propaganda. It is possible, however, that "Dorinda" points to some coming change, and certainly it would be a pity

if the Muse of Fiction confined her attention entirely to the East End.

The four remarkable women whom Mrs. Walford has chosen as the subjects of her "Four Biographies from Blackwood" (William Blackwood and Sons) are Jane Taylor, Elizabeth Fry, Hannah More, and Mary Somerville. Perhaps it is too much to say that Jane Taylor is remarkable. In her day she was said to have been "known to four continents," and Sir Walter Scott described her as "among the first women of her time"; but no one now cares to read "Essays in Rhyme," or "Display," though the latter is really a very clever novel and full of capital things. Elizabeth Fry is, of course, one of the great personalities of this century, at any rate in the particular sphere to which she devoted herself, and ranks with the many uncanonised saints whom the world has loved, and whose memory is sweet. Mrs. Walford gives a most interesting account of her. We see her first a gay, laughing, flaxen-haired girl, "mightily addicted to fun," pleased to be finely dressed and sent to the opera to see the "Prince," and be seen by him; pleased to exhibit her pretty figure in a becoming scarlet riding-habit, and to be looked at with ob-

vious homage by the young officers quartered hard by, as she rode along the Norfolk lanes; "dissipated" by simply hearing their band play in the square, and made giddy by the veriest trifle: "an idle, flirting, worldly girl," to use her own words. Then came the eventful day when "in purple boots laced with scarlet" she went to hear William Savery preach at the Meeting House. This was the turning-point of her life, her psychological moment, as the phrase goes. After it came the era of "thees" and "thous," of the drab gown and the beaver hat, of the visits to Newgate and the convict ships, of the work of rescuing the outcast and seeking the lost. Mrs. Walford quotes the following interesting account of the famous interview with Queen Charlotte at the Mansion House:—

"Inside the Egyptian Hall there was a subject for Hayter—the diminutive stature of the Queen, covered with diamonds, and her countenance lighted up with the kindest benevolence; Mrs. Fry, her simple Quaker's dress adding to the height of her figure—though a little flushed—preserving her wonted calmness of look and manner; several of the bishops standing near; the platform crowded with waving feathers, jewels, and orders; the hall

lined with spectators, gaily and nobly clad, and the centre filled with hundreds of children, brought there from their different schools to be examined. A murmur of applause ran through the assemblage as the Queen took Mrs. Fry by the hand. The murmur was followed by a clap and a shout, which was taken up by the multitudes without till it died away in the distance."

Those who regard Hannah More as a prim maiden lady of the conventional type, with a pious and literary turn of mind, will be obliged to change their views should they read Mrs. Walford's admirable sketch of the authoress of "Percy." Hannah More was a brilliant wit, a *femme d'esprit* passionately fond of society, and loved by society in return. When the serious-minded little country girl, who at the age of eight had covered a whole quire of paper with letters seeking to reform imaginary depraved characters, and with return epistles full of contrition and promises of amendment, paid her first visit to London, she became at once the intimate friend of Johnson, Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Garrick and most of the distinguished people of the day, delighting them by her charm, and grace, and wit. "I dined at the

Adelphi yesterday," she writes in one of her letters. "Garrick was the very soul of the company, and I never saw Johnson in more perfect good-humour. After all had risen to go we stood round them for above an hour, laughing, in defiance of every rule of decorum and Chesterfield. I believe we should never have thought of sitting down, nor of parting, had not an impertinent watchman been saucily vociferating. Johnson outstaid them all, and sat with me for half-an-hour." The following is from her sister's pen:—

"On Tuesday evening we drank tea at Sir Joshua's with Dr. Johnson. Hannah is certainly a great favourite. She was placed next him, and they had the entire conversation to themselves. They were both in remarkably high spirits, and it was certainly her lucky night; I never heard her say so many good things. The old genius was as jocular as the young one was pleasant. You would have imagined we were at some comedy had you heard our peals of laughter. They certainly tried which could 'pepper the highest,' and it is not clear to me that the lexicographer was really the highest seasoner."

Hannah More was certainly, as Mrs. Walford

says, "the fêted and caressed idol of society." The theatre at Bristol vaunted, "Boast we not a More?" and the learned cits at Oxford inscribed their acknowledgment of her authority. Horace Walpole sat on the doorstep—or threatened to do so—till she promised to go down to Strawberry Hill; Foster quoted her; Mrs. Thrale twined her arms about her; Wilberforce consulted her and employed her. When "The Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World" was published anonymously, "Aut Morus, aut Angelus," exclaimed the Bishop of London, before he had read six pages. Of her village stories and ballads two million copies were sold during the first year. "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife" ran into thirty editions. Mrs. Barbauld writes to tell her about "a good and sensible woman" of her acquaintance, who, on being asked how she contrived to divert herself in the country, replied, "I have my spinning-wheel and my Hannah More. When I have spun one pound of flax I put on another, and when I have finished my book I begin it again. *I want no other amusement.*" How incredible it all sounds! No wonder that Mrs. Walford exclaims, "No other amusement! Good heavens! Breathes there a man, woman, or child with soul so quiescent nowadays as

to be satisfied with reels of flax and yards of Hannah More? Give us Hannah's company, but not—not her writings!" It is only fair to say that Mrs. Walford has thoroughly carried out the views she expresses in this passage, for she gives us nothing of Hannah More's grandiloquent literary productions, and yet succeeds in making us know her thoroughly. The whole book is well written, but the biography of Hannah More is a wonderfully brilliant sketch, and deserves great praise.

Miss Mabel Wotton has invented a new form of picture-gallery. Feeling that the visible aspect of men and women can be expressed in literature no less than through the medium of line and colour, she has collected together a series of "Word-Portraits of Famous Writers" (Richard Bentley and Son), extending from Geoffrey Chaucer to Mrs. Henry Wood. It is a far cry from the author of the "Canterbury Tales" to the authoress of "East Lynne"; but, as a beauty, at any rate, Mrs. Wood deserved to be described, and we hear of the pure oval of her face, of her perfect mouth, her "dazzling complexion," and the extraordinary youth by which "she kept to the last the freshness of a young girl." Many of the "famous writers" seem

to have been very ugly. Thomson, the poet, was of a dull countenance, and a gross, unanimated, uninviting appearance; Richardson looked like a plump white mouse in a wig." Pope is described in the *Guardian,* in 1713, as a lively little creature, with long arms and legs; a spider is no ill emblem of him; he has been taken at a distance for a small windmill." Charles Kingsley appears as "rather tall, very angular, surprisingly awkward, with thin staggering legs, a hatchet-face adorned with scraggy grey whiskers, a faculty for falling into the most ungainly attitudes, and making the most hideous contortions of visage and mane; with a rough provincial accent and an uncouth way of speaking, which would be set down for absurd caricature on the boards of a comic theatre." Lamb is described by Carlyle as "the leanest of mankind; tiny black breeches, buttoned to the knee-cap and no further, surmounting spindle legs also in black, face and head fineish, black, bony, lean, and of a Jew type rather"; and Talfourd says that the best portrait of him is his own description of Braham—"a compound of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel." William Godwin was "short and stout, his clothes loosely and carelessly put on, and usually old and worn; his hands were

generally in his pockets. He had a remarkably large bald head and a weak voice, seeming generally half asleep when he walked and even when he talked." Lord Charlemont spoke of David Hume as more like a "turtle-eating alderman" than "a refined philosopher." Mary Russell Mitford was ill-naturedly described by L. E. L. as "Sancho Panza in petticoats"; and as for poor Rogers, who was somewhat cadaverous, the descriptions given of him are quite dreadful. Lord Dudley once asked him, "Why, now that he could afford it, he did not set up a hearse?" And it is said that Sydney Smith gave him mortal offence by recommending him "when he sat for his portrait to be drawn saying his prayers, with his face hidden in his hands," christened him the "Death Dandy," and wrote underneath a picture of him, "Painted in his lifetime." We must console ourselves—if not with Mr. Hardy's statement that "ideal physical beauty is incompatible with mental development, and a full recognition of the evil of things"—at least with the pictures of those who had some comeliness, and grace, and charm. Dr. Grosart says of a miniature of Edmund Spenser, "It is an exquisitely beautiful face; the brow is ample, the lips thin but mobile, the eyes a greyish-blue, the

hair and beard a golden red (as of 'red monie' of the ballads) or goldenly-chestnut, the nose with semi-transparent nostrils and keen, the chin firm-poised, the expression refined and delicate." Altogether just such a "presentment" of the Poet of Beauty as one would have imagined. Antony Wood describes Sir Richard Lovelace as being, at the age of sixteen, "the most amiable and beautiful person that ever eye beheld." Nor need we wonder at this when we remember the portrait of Lovelace that hangs at Dulwich College. Barry Cornwall, described himself by S. C. Hall as "a decidedly rather pretty little fellow," said of Keats: "His countenance lives in my mind as one of singular beauty and brightness; it had an expression as if he had been looking on some glorious sight." Chatterton and Byron were splendidly handsome, and beauty of a high spiritual order may be claimed both for Milton and Shelley, though an industrious gentleman lately wrote a book in two volumes apparently for the purpose of proving that the latter of these two poets had a snub nose. Hazlitt once said that "A man's life may be a lie to himself and others, and yet a picture painted of him by a great artist would probably stamp his character." Few of the word-

portraits in Miss Wotton's book can be said to have been drawn by a great artist, but they are all interesting, and Miss Wotton has certainly shown a wonderful amount of industry in collecting her references and in grouping them. It is not a book to be read through from beginning to end, but it is a delightful book to glance at, and by its means one can raise the ghosts of the dead, at least as well as the Psychical Society can.

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"In modern life," said Matthew Arnold once, "you cannot well enter a monastery; but you can enter the Wordsworth Society." I fear that this will sound to many a somewhat uninviting description of this admirable and useful body, whose papers and productions have been recently published by Professor Knight, under the title of "Wordsworthiana" (Macmillan and Co.). "Plain living and high thinking" are not popular ideals. Most people prefer to live in luxury, and to think with the majority. However, there is really nothing in the essays and addresses of the Wordsworth Society that need cause the public any unnecessary alarm; and it is gratifying to note that, although the society is still in the first flush of enthusiasm,

it has not yet insisted upon our admiring Wordsworth's inferior work. It praises what is worthy of praise, reverences what should be reverenced, and explains what does not require explanation. One paper is quite delightful; it is from the pen of Mr. Rawnsley, and deals with such reminiscences of Wordsworth as still linger among the peasantry of Westmoreland. Mr. Rawnsley grew up, he tells us, in the immediate vicinity of the present Poet-Laureate's old home in Lincolnshire, and had been struck by the swiftness with which,

> "As year by year the labourer tills
> His wonted glebe, or lops the glades,"

the memories of the poet of the Somersby Wold had "faded from off the circle of the hills"—had, indeed, been astonished to note how little real interest was taken in him or his fame, and how seldom his works were met with in the houses of the rich or poor in the very neighbourhood. Accordingly, when he came to reside in the Lake Country, he endeavoured to find out what of Wordsworth's memory among the men of the Dales still lingered on—how far he was still a moving presence among them—how far his works had made their way into

the cottages and farmhouses of the valleys. He also tried to discover how far the race of Westmorcland and Cumberland farm-folk—the "Matthews" and the "Michaels" of the poet, as described by him—were real or fancy pictures, or how far the characters of the Dalesmen had been altered in any remarkable manner by tourist influences during the thirty-two years that have passed since the Lake poet was laid to rest.

With regard to the latter point, it will be remembered that Mr. Ruskin, writing in 1876, said that "the Border peasantry, painted with absolute fidelity by Scott and Wordsworth," are as hitherto, a scarcely injured race; that in his fields at Coniston he had men who might have fought with Henry V at Agincourt without being distinguished from any of his knights; that he could take his tradesmen's word for a thousand pounds, and need never latch his garden gate; and that he did not fear molestation, in wood or on moor, for his girl guests. Mr. Rawnsley, however, found that a certain beauty had vanished which the simple retirement of the old valley days fifty years ago gave to the men among whom Wordsworth lived. "The strangers," he says, "with their gifts of gold, their vulgarity, and their requirements, have much to

answer for." As for their impressions of Wordsworth, to understand them one must understand the vernacular of the Lake District. "What was Mr. Wordsworth like in personal appearance?" said Mr. Rawnsley once to an old retainer, who still lives not far from Rydal Mount. "He was a ugly-faäced man, and a mean liver," was the answer; but all that was really meant was that he was a man of marked features, and led a very simple life in matters of food and raiment. Another old man, who believed that Wordsworth "got most of his poetry out of Hartley," spoke of the poet's wife as "a very onpleasant woman, very onpleasant indeed. A close-fisted woman, that's what she was." This, however, seems to have been merely a tribute to Mrs. Wordsworth's admirable housekeeping qualities.

The first person interviewed by Mr. Rawnsley was an old lady who had been once in service at Rydal Mount, and was, in 1870, a lodging-house keeper at Grasmere. She was not a very imaginative person, as may be gathered from the following anecdote:—Mr. Rawnsley's sister came in from a late evening walk, and said, "Oh, Mrs. D——! have you seen the wonderful sunset?" The good lady turned sharply round, and, drawing herself

to her full height, as if mortally offended, answered: "No, miss; I'm a tidy cook, I know, and they say a decentish body for a landlady, but I don't know anything about sunsets, and them sort of things; they've never been in my line." Her reminiscence of Wordsworth was as worthy of tradition as it was explanatory, from her point of view, of the method in which Wordsworth composed, and was helped in his labours by his enthusiastic sister. "Well, you know," she said, "Mr. Wordsworth went humming and booing about, and she—Miss Dorothy—kept close behind him, and she picked up the bits as he let 'em fall, and tak' 'em doon, and put 'em together on paper for him. And you may be very well sure as how she didn't understand nor make sense out of 'em; and I doubt that he didn't know much about them either himself; but, howivver, there's a great many folk as do, I daresay." Of Wordsworth's habit of talking to himself, and composing aloud, we hear a great deal. "Was Mr. Wordsworth a sociable man?" asked Mr. Rawnsley of a Rydal farmer. "Wudsworth, for a' he had no pride, nor nowt," was the answer, "was a man who was quite one to hissel, ye kna. He was not a man as folks could crack wi', nor not a man as could crack wi' folks.

But there was another thing as kep' folk off: he had a ter'ble girt deep voice, and ye might see his face agaan for long enuff. I've knoan folks—village lads and lasses—coming over by old road above, which runs from Grasmere to Rydal, flayt a'most to death there by wishing-gaate, to hear the girt voice a-groanin' and mutterin' and thunderin' of a still evening. And he had a way of standin' quite still, by the rock there in the path under Rydal, and folks could hear sounds like a wild beast coming from the rocks, and children were scared fit to be dead, a'most."

Wordsworth's description of himself constantly recurs to one:—

"And who is he with modest looks,
And clad in sober russet gown?
He murmurs by the running brooks,
A music sweeter than their own;
He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noonday grove."

But the corroboration comes in strange guise. Mr. Rawnsley asked one of the Dalesmen about Wordsworth's dress and habits. This was the reply:—"Wudsworth wore a Jem Crow; never seed him in

a boxer in my life; a Jem Crow and an old blue cloak was his rig; and *as for his habits, he had none;* never knew him with a pot in his hand, or a pipe in his mouth. But he was a great skater, for all that—none better in these parts. Why, he could cut his own name upon the ice, could Mr. Wudsworth." Skating seems to have been Wordsworth's one form of amusement. He was "over feckless with his hands"—could not drive or ride —"hadn't a bit of fish in him, and was no mountaineer." But he could skate. The rapture of the time when, as a boy, on Esthwaite's frozen lake, he had

"——wheeled about,
Proud and exulting, like an untired horse,
That cares not for his home, and, shod with steel,
Had hissed along the polished ice,"

was continued, Mr. Rawnsley tells us, into manhood's later day; and Mr. Rawnsley found many proofs that the skill the poet had gained, when

"Not seldom from the uproar he retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star,"

was of such a kind as to astonish the natives

among whom he dwelt. The recollection of a fall he once had, when his skate caught on a stone, still lingers in the district. A boy had been sent to sweep the snow from the White Moss Tarn for him. "Did Mr. Wudsworth gie ye owt?" he was asked, when he returned from his labour. "Na; but I seed him tumble, though," was the answer. "He was a ter'ble girt skater, was Wudsworth, now," says one of Mr. Rawnsley's informants; "he would put one hand in his breast (he wore a frill shirt in them days), and t'other hand in his waist-band, same as shepherds does to keep their hands warm; and he would stand up straight, and swing away grandly."

Of his poetry they did not think much, and whatever was good in it they ascribe to his wife, his sister, and Hartley Coleridge. He wrote poetry, they said, "because he couldn't help it—because it was his hobby"—for sheer love, and not for money. They could not understand his doing work "for nowt," and held his occupation in somewhat light esteem because it did not bring in "a deal o' brass to the pocket." "Did you ever read his poetry, or see any books about in the farmhouses?" asked Mr. Rawnsley. The answer was curious:—"Ay, ay, time or two; but you're well aware that there's

poetry and poetry. There's poetry with a little bit pleasant in it, and poetry such as a man can laugh at or the children understand, and some as takes a deal of mastery to find out what's said, and a deal of Wudsworth was this sort, you know. You could tell from the man's face his poetry would never have no laugh in it. His poetry was quite different work from little Hartley. Hartley would go running along beside the brooks and make his, and go in the fust open door, and write what he had got upon paper. But Wudsworth's poetry was real hard stuff, and bided a deal of making, and he'd keep it in his head for long enough. Eh, but it's queer, mon, different ways folks has of making poetry now. Not but what Mr. Wudsworth didn't stand very high, and was a well-spoken man enough." The best criticism on Wordsworth that Mr. Rawnsley heard was this: "He was an open-air man, and a great critic of trees."

There are many useful and well-written essays in Professor Knight's volume, but Mr. Rawnsley's is far the most interesting of all. It gives us a graphic picture of the poet as he appeared in outward semblance and manner to those about whom he wrote.

"Mary Myles" (Remington and Co.) is Mrs. Edmonds's first attempt at writing fiction. Mrs. Edmonds is well known as an authority on modern Greek literature, and her style has often a very pleasant literary flavour, though in her dialogues she has not as yet quite grasped the difference between *la langue parlée* and *la langue écrite.* Her heroine is a sort of Nausicaa from Girton, who develops into the Pallas Athena of a provincial school. She has her love-romance, like her Homeric prototype, and her Odysseus returns to her at the close of the book. It is a nice story.

Lady Dilke's "Art in the Modern State" (Chapman & Hall) is a book that cannot fail to deeply interest everyone who cares either for art or for history. The "modern State" which gives its title to the book is that political and social organisation of our day that comes to us from the France of Richelieu and Colbert, and is the direct outcome of the "Grand Siècle," the true greatness of which century, as Lady Dilke points out, consists not in its vain wars, and formal stage and stilted eloquence, and pompous palaces, but in the formation and working out of the political and social system of which these things were the first fruits.

To the question that naturally rises on one's lips, "How can one dwell on the art of the seventeenth century?—it has no charm," Lady Dilke answers that this art presents in its organisation, from the point of view of social polity, problems of the highest intellectual interest. Throughout all its phases—to quote her own words—"the life of France wears, during the seventeenth century, a political aspect. The explanation of all changes in the social system, in letters, in the arts, in fashions even, has to be sought in the necessities of the political position; and the seeming caprices of taste take their rise from the same causes which went to determine the making of a treaty or the promulgation of an edict. This seems all the stranger because, in times preceding, letters and the arts, at least, appeared to flourish in conditions as far removed from the action of statecraft as if they had been a growth of fairyland. In the Middle Ages they were devoted to a virgin image of Virtue; they framed, in the shade of the sanctuary, an ideal shining with the beauty born of self-renunciation, of resignation to self-enforced conditions of moral and physical suffering. By the queenly Venus of the Renaissance they were consecrated to the joys of life, and the world saw that through

their perfect use men might renew their strength, and behold virtue and beauty with clear eyes. It was, however, reserved for the rulers of France in the seventeenth century fully to realise the political functions of letters and the arts in the modern State, and their immense importance in connection with the prosperity of a commercial nation."

The whole subject is certainly extremely fascinating. The Renaissance had for its object the development of great personalities. The perfect freedom of the temperament in matters of art, the perfect freedom of the intellect in intellectual matters, the full development of the individual, were the things it aimed at. As we study its history we find it full of great anarchies. It solved no political or social problems; it did not seek to solve them. The ideal of the "Grand Siècle," and of Richelieu, in whom the forces of that great age were incarnate, was different. The ideas of citizenship, of the building up of a great nation, of the centralisation of forces, of collective action, of ethic unity of purpose, came before the world. It was inevitable that they should have done so, and Lady Dilke, with her keen historic sense and her wonderful power of grouping facts, has told us the

story of their struggle and their victory. Her book is, from every point of view, a most remarkable work. Her style is almost French in its clearness, its sobriety, its fine and, at times, ascetic simplicity. The whole ground-plan and intellectual conception is admirable.

It is, of course, easy to see how much Art lost by having a new mission forced upon her. The creation of a formal tradition upon classical lines is never without its danger, and it is sad to find the provincial towns of France, once so varied and individual in artistic expression, writing to Paris for designs and advice. And yet, through Colbert's great centralising scheme of State supervision and State aid, France was the one country in Europe, and has remained the one country in Europe, where the arts are not divorced from industry. The Academy of Painting and Sculpture and the School of Architecture were not, to quote Lady Dilke's words, called into being in order that Royal palaces should be raised surpassing all others in magnificence:—"Bièvrebache and the Savonnerie were not established only that such palaces should be furnished more sumptuously than those of an Eastern fairy-tale. Colbert did not care chiefly to inquire, when organising art ad-

ministration, what were the institutions best fitted to foster the proper interests of art; he asked, in the first place, what would most contribute to swell the national importance. Even so, in surrounding the King with the treasures of luxury, his object was twofold—their possession should, indeed, illustrate the Crown, but should also be a unique source of advantage to the people. Glassworkers were brought from Venice, and lacemakers from Flanders, that they might yield to France the secrets of their skill. Palaces and public buildings were to afford commissions for French artists, and a means of technical and artistic education for all those employed upon them. The Royal collections were but a further instrument in educating the taste and increasing the knowledge of the working classes. The costly factories of the Savonnerie and the Gobelins were practical schools, in which every detail of every branch of all those industries which contribute to the furnishing and decoration of houses was brought to perfection; whilst a band of chosen apprentices were trained in the adjoining schools. To Colbert is due the honour of having foreseen not only that the interests of the modern State were inseparably bound up with those of industry, but also that the in-

terests of industry could not, without prejudice, be divorced from art."

Mr. Bret Harte has never written anything finer than "Cressy" (Macmillan & Co.). It is one of his most brilliant and masterly productions, and will take rank with the best of his Californian stories. Hawthorne recreated for us the America of the past with the incomparable grace of a very perfect artist, but Mr. Bret Harte's emphasised modernity has, in its own sphere, won equal, or almost equal, triumphs. Wit, pathos, humour, realism, exaggeration, and romance, are in this marvellous story all blended together, and out of the very clash and chaos of these things comes life itself. And what a curious life it is, half civilised and half barbarous, *naïve* and corrupt, chivalrous and commonplace, real and improbable! Cressy herself is the most tantalising of heroines. She is always eluding one's grasp. It is difficult to say whether she sacrifices herself on the altar of romance, or is merely a girl with an extraordinary sense of humour. She is intangible, and the more we know of her the more incomprehensible she becomes. It is pleasant to come across a heroine who is not identified with any great cause, and rep-

resents no important principle, but is simply a wonderful nymph from American backwoods, who has in her something of Artemis, and not a little of Aphrodite.

It is always a pleasure to come across an American poet who is not national, and who tries to give expression to the literature that he loves rather than to the land in which he lives. The Muses care so little for geography! Mr. Richard Day's "Poems" (Cassell & Co., New York) have nothing distinctively American about them. Here and there in his verse one comes across a flower that does not bloom in our meadows, a bird to which our woodlands have never listened. But the spirit that animates the verse is simple and human, and there is hardly a poem in the volume that English lips might not have uttered. "Sounds of the Temple" has much in it that is interesting in metre as well as in matter:

"Then sighed a poet from his soul:
'The clouds are blown across the stars,
And chill have grown my lattice bars;
I cannot keep my vigil whole
By the lone candle of my soul.

"'This reed had once devoutest tongue,
And sang as if to its small throat
God listened for a perfect note;
As charily this lyre was strung:
God's praise is slow and has no tongue.'"

But the best poem is undoubtedly the "Hymn to the Mountain":

"Within the hollow of thy hand—
This wooded dell half up the height,
Where streams take breath midway in flight—
Here let me stand.

"Here warbles not a lowland bird,
Here are no babbling tongues of men;
Thy rivers rustling through the glen
Alone are heard.

"Above, no pinion cleaves its way,
Save when the eagle's wing, as now,
With sweep imperial shades thy brow,
Beetling and grey.

"What thoughts are thine, majestic peak?
And moods that were not born to chime
With poet's ineffectual rhyme
And numbers weak?

"The green earth spreads thy gaze before,
And the unfailing skies are brought
Within the level of thy thought.
There is no more.

"The stars salute thy rugged crown
With syllables of twinkling fire;
Like choral burst from distant choir,
Their psalm rolls down.

"And I within this temple niche,
Like statue set where prophets talk,
Catch strains they murmur as they walk,
And I am rich."

Miss Ella Curtis's "A Game of Chance" (Hurst & Blackett) is certainly the best novel that this clever young writer has as yet produced. If it has a fault, it is that it is crowded with too much incident, and often surrenders the study of character to the development of plot. Indeed, it has many plots, each of which, in more economical hands, would have served as the basis of a complete story. We have as the central incident the career of a clever lady's maid, who personifies her mistress, and is welcomed by Sir John Erskine, an

English country gentleman, as the widow of his dead son. The real husband of the adventuress tracks his wife to England and claims her. She pretends that he is insane, and has him removed. Then he tries to murder her, and when she recovers she finds her beauty gone and her secret discovered. There is quite enough sensation here to interest even the jaded city man, who is said to have grown quite critical of late on the subject of what is really a thrilling plot. But Miss Curtis is not satisfied. The lady's maid has an extremely handsome brother, who is a wonderful musician, and has a divine tenor voice. With him the stately Lady Judith falls wildly in love, and this part of the story is treated with a great deal of subtlety and clever analysis. However, Lady Judith does not marry her rustic Orpheus, so the social *convenances* are undisturbed. The romance of the Rector of the parish, who falls in love with a charming school teacher, is a good deal overshadowed by Lady Judith's story, but it is pleasantly told. A more important episode is the marriage between the daughter of the Tory squire and the Radical candidate for the borough. They separate on their wedding day, and are not reconciled till the third volume. No one could say that Miss Curtis's book

is dull. In fact, her style is very bright and amusing. It is impossible, perhaps, not to be a little bewildered by the amount of characters, and by the crowded incidents; but, on the whole, the scheme of the construction is clear, and certainly the decoration is admirable.

* * * * *

Miss Caroline Fitzgerald's volume of poems, "Venetia Victrix" (Macmillan & Co.), is dedicated to Mr. Robert Browning, and in the poem that gives its title to the book it is not difficult to see traces of Mr. Browning's influence. "Venetia Victrix" is a powerful psychological study of a man's soul, a vivid presentation of a terrible, fiery-coloured moment in a marred and incomplete life. It is sometimes complex and intricate in expression, but then the subject itself is intricate and complex. Plastic simplicity of outline may render for us the visible aspects of life; it is different when we come to deal with those secrets which self-consciousness alone contains, and which self-consciousness itself can but half reveal. Action takes place in the sunlight, but the soul works in the dark.

There is something curiously interesting in the

marked tendency of modern poetry to become obscure. Many critics, writing with their eyes fixed on the masterpieces of past literature, have ascribed this tendency to wilfulness and to affectation. Its origin is rather to be found in the complexity of the new problems, and in the fact that self-consciousness is not yet adequate to explain the contents of the Ego. In Mr. Browning's poems, as in life itself which has suggested, or rather necessitated, the new method, thought seems to proceed not on logical lines, but on lines of passion. The unity of the individual is being expressed through its inconsistencies and its contradictions. In a strange twilight man is seeking for himself, and when he has found his own image he cannot understand it. Objective forms of art, such as sculpture and the drama, sufficed once for the perfect presentation of life; they can no longer so suffice.

The central motive of Miss Caroline Fitzgerald's psychological poem is the study of a man who to do a noble action wrecks his own soul, sells it to evil, and to the spirit of evil. Many martyrs have for a great cause sacrificed their physical life; the sacrifice of the spiritual life has a more poignant and a more tragic note. The story is

supposed to be told by a French doctor, sitting at his window in Paris one evening:

"How far off Venice seems to-night! How dim
The still-remembered sunsets, with the rim
Of gold round the stone haloes, where they stand,
Those carven saints, and look towards the land,
Right westward, perched on high, with palm in hand,
Completing the peaked church-front. Oh, how clear
And dark against the evening splendour! Steer
Between the graveyard island and the quay,
Where north-winds dash the spray on Venice; see
The rosy light behind dark dome and tower,
Or gaunt smoke-laden chimney; mark the power
Of Nature's gentleness, in use or fall
Of interlinked beauty, to recall
Earth's majesty in desecration's place,
Lending yon grimy pile that dream-like face
Of evening beauty; note yon rugged cloud,
Red-rimmed and heavy, drooping like a shroud
Over Murano in the dying day.
I see it now as then—so far away!"

The face of a boy in the street catches his eye. He seems to see in it some likeness to a dead

friend. He begins to think, and at last remembers a hospital ward in Venice:

"'Twas an April day,
The year Napoleon's troops took Venice—say
The twenty-fifth of April. All alone,
Walking the ward, I heard a sick man moan,
In tones so piteous, as his heart would break:
'Lost, lost, and lost again—for Venice' sake!'
I turned. There lay a man, no longer young,
Wasted with fever. I had marked, none hung
About his bed, as friends, with tenderness,
And when the priest went by, he spared to bless,
Glancing perplexed—perhaps mere sullenness.
I stopped and questioned: 'What is lost, my friend?'
'My soul is lost, and now draws near the end.
My soul is surely lost. Send me no priest!
They sing and solemnise the marriage feast
Of man's salvation in the house of love,
And I in Hell, and God in Heaven above,
And Venice safe and fair on earth between—
No love of mine—mere service—for my Queen.'"

He was a seaman, and the tale he tells the doctor before he dies is strange and not a little terrible.

Wild rage against a foster-brother who had bitterly wronged him, and who was one of the ten rulers over Venice, drives him to make a mad oath that on the day when he does anything for his country's good he will give his soul to Satan. That night he sails for Dalmatia, and as he is keeping the watch, he sees a phantom boat with seven fiends sailing to Venice:

"I heard the fiends' shrill cry: 'For Venice' good!
Rival thine ancient foe in gratitude,
Then come and make thy home with us in hell!'
I knew it must be so. I knew the spell
Of Satan on my soul. I felt the power
Granted by God to serve Him one last hour,
Then fall for ever as the curse had wrought.
I climbed aloft. My brain had grown one thought,
One hope, one purpose. And I heard the hiss
Of raging disappointment, loth to miss
Its prey—I heard the lapping of the flame,
That through the blanched figures went and came,
Darting in frenzy to the Devil's yell.
I set that cross on high, and cried: 'To hell
My soul for ever, and my deed to God!
Once Venice guarded safe, let this vile clod
Drift where fate will.'

And then (the hideous laugh
Of fiends in full possession, keen to quaff
The wine of one new soul not weak with tears,
Pealing like ruinous thunder in mine ears)
I fell, and heard no more. The pale day broke
Through lazar-windows, when once more I woke,
Remembering I might no more dare to pray."

The idea of the story is extremely powerful, and "Venetia Victrix" is certainly the best poem in the volume—better than "Ophelion," which is vague, and than "A Friar's Story," which is pretty but ordinary. It shows that we have in Miss Fitzgerald a new singer of considerable ability and vigour of mind, and it serves to remind us of the splendid dramatic possibilities extant in life, which are ready for poetry, and unsuitable for the stage. What is really dramatic is not necessarily that which is fitting for presentation in a theatre. The theatre is an accident of the dramatic form. It is not essential to it. We have been deluded by the name of action. To think is to act.

Of the shorter poems collected here, this "Hymn to Persephone" is, perhaps, the best:

"Oh, fill my cup, Persephone,
With dim red wine of Spring,
And drop therein a faded leaf
Plucked from the autumn's bearded sheaf,
Whence, dread one, I may quaff to thee
While all the woodlands ring.

"Oh, fill my heart, Persephone,
With thine immortal pain,
That lingers round the willow bowers
In memories of old happy hours,
When thou didst wander fair and free
O'er Enna's blooming plain.

"Oh, fill my soul, Persephone,
With music all thine own!
Teach me some song thy childhood knew,
Lisped in the meadows' morning dew,
Or chant on this high windy lea
Thy godhead's ceaseless moan."

But this "Venetian Song" also has a good deal of charm:

"Leaning between carved stone and stone,
As glossy birds peer from a nest
Scooped in the crumbling trunk where rest
Their freckled eggs, I pause alone

And linger in the light awhile,
Waiting for joy to come to me—
Only the dawn beyond yon isle,
Only the sunlight on the sea.

"I gaze—then turn and ply my loom,
Or broider blossoms close beside;
The morning world lies warm and wide,
But here is dim, cool, silent gloom,
Gold crust and crimson velvet pile,
And not one face to smile on me—
Only the dawn beyond yon isle,
Only the sunlight on the sea.

"Over the world the splendours break
Of morning light and noontide glow,
And when the broad red sun sinks low,
And in the wave long shadows shake,
Youths, maidens, glad with song and wile,
Glide and are gone, and leave with me
Only the dawn beyond yon isle,
Only the sunlight on the sea."

"Darwinism and Politics" (Swan Sonnenschein & Co.), by Mr. David Ritchie, of Jesus College, Oxford, contains some very interesting speculations

on the position and the future of women in the modern State. The one objection to the equality of the sexes that he considers deserves serious attention is that made by Sir James Stephen in his clever attack on John Stuart Mill. Sir James Stephen points out (in "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," p. 237) that women may suffer more than they have done, if plunged into a nominally equal but really unequal contest in the already over-crowded labour market. Mr. Ritchie answers that, while the conclusion usually drawn from this argument is a sentimental reaction in favour of the old family ideal, as, for instance, in Mr. Besant's books, there is another alternative, and that is the resettling of the labour question. "The elevation of the status of women and the regulation of the conditions of labour are ultimately," he says, "inseparable questions. On the basis of individualism, I cannot see how it is possible to answer the objections of Sir James Stephen." Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his "Sociology," expresses his fear that women, if admitted now to political life, might do mischief by introducing the ethics of the family into the State. "Under the ethics of the family the greatest benefits must be given where the merits are smallest; under the ethics of the

State the benefits must be proportioned to the merits." In answer to this, Mr. Ritchie asks whether in any society we have ever seen people so get benefits in proportion to their merits, and protests against Mr. Spencer's separation of the ethics of the family from those of the State. If something is right in a family, it is difficult to see why it is, therefore, without any further reason, wrong in the State. If the participation of women in politics means that as a good family educates all its members, so must a good State, what better issue could there be? The family ideal of the State may be difficult of attainment, but as an ideal it is better than the policeman theory. It would mean the moralisation of politics. The cultivation of separate sorts of virtues and separate ideals of duty in men and women has led to the whole social fabric being weaker and unhealthier than it need be. As for the objection that in countries where it is considered necessary to have compulsory military service for all men, it would be unjust and inexpedient that women should have a voice in political matters, Mr. Ritchie meets it, or tries to meet it, by proposing that all women physically fitted for such purpose should be compelled to undergo training as nurses, and should

be liable to be called upon to serve as nurses in time of war. This training, he remarks, "would be more useful to them and to the community in time of peace than his military training is to the peasant or artisan." Mr. Ritchie's little book is extremely suggestive, and full of valuable ideas for the philosophic student of sociology.

Mr. Alan Cole's lecture on "Irish Lace," delivered recently before the Society of Arts, contains some extremely useful suggestions as to the best method of securing an immediate connection between the art schools of a country and the country's ordinary manufactures. In 1883, Mr. Cole was deputed by the Department of Science and Art to lecture at Cork and at Limerick on the subject of lace-making, and to give a history of its rise and development in other countries, as well as a review of the many kinds of ornamental patterns used from the sixteenth century to modern times. In order to make these lectures of practical value, Mr. Cole placed typical specimens of Irish lace beside Italian, Flemish, and French laces, which seem to be the prototypes of the lace of Ireland. The public interest was immediately aroused. Some of the newspapers stoutly main-

tained that the ornament and patterns of Irish lace were of such a national character that it was wrong to asperse them on that score. Others took a different view, and came to the conclusion that Irish lace could be vastly improved in all respects if some systematic action could be taken to induce the lace-makers to work from more intelligently composed patterns than those in general use. There was a concensus of opinion that the workmanship of Irish laces was good, and that it could be applied to better materials than those ordinarily used, and that its methods were suited to render a greater variety of patterns than those usually attempted.

These and other circumstances seem to have prompted the promoters of the Cork Exhibition to further efforts in the cause of lace-making. Towards the close of the year 1883 they made fresh representations to the Government, and inquired what forms of State assistance could be given. A number of convents in the neighbourhood of Cork were engaged in giving instruction to children under their care in lace and crochet-making. At some, rooms were allotted for the use of grown-up workers, who made laces under the supervision of the nuns. These convents obviously were cen-

tres where experiments in reform could be tried. The convents, however, lacked instruction in the designing of patterns for laces. An excellent School of Art was at work at Cork, but the students there had not been instructed in special designing for lace. If the convents, with their workrooms, could be brought into relation with this School of Art, it seemed possible that something of a serious character might be done to benefit lace-makers, and also to open up a new field in ornamental design for the students at the School of Art. The rules of the Department of Science and Art were found to be adapted to aid in meeting such wants as those sketched out by the promoters at Cork. As the nuns in the different lace-making convents had not been able to attend in Cork to hear Mr. Cole's lectures, they asked that he should visit them and repeat them at the convents. This Mr. Cole did early in 1884, the masters of the local schools of art accompanying him on his visits. Negotiations were forthwith opened for connecting the convents with the art schools. By the end of 1885 some six or seven different lace-making convents had placed themselves in connection with Schools of Art at Cork and Waterford. These convents were attended not only by

the nuns, but by outside pupils also; and, at the request of the convents, Mr. Cole has visited them twice a year, lecturing and giving advice upon designs for lace. The composition of new patterns for lace was attempted, and old patterns which had degenerated were revised and redrawn for the use of the workers connected with the convents. There are now twelve convents, Mr. Cole tells us, where instruction in drawing and in the composition of patterns is given, and some of the students have won some of the higher prizes offered by the Department of Science and Art for designing lace patterns.

The Cork School of Art then acquired a collection of finely patterned old laces, selections from which are freely circulated through the different convents connected with that school. They have also the privilege of borrowing similar specimens of old lace from the South Kensington Museum. So successful has been the system of education pursued by Mr. Brennan, the head master of the Cork School of Art, that two female students of his school last year gained the gold and silver medals for their designs for laces and crochets at the national competition which annually takes place in London between all the Schools of Art in

the United Kingdom. As for the many lace-makers who were not connected either with the convents or with the art schools, in order to assist them a committee of ladies and gentlemen interested in Irish lace-making raised subscriptions, and offered prizes to be competed for by designers generally. The best designs were then placed out with lace-makers, and carried into execution. It is, of course, often said that the proper person to make the design is the lace-maker. Mr. Coles, however, points out that from the sixteenth century forward the patterns for ornamental laces have always been designed by decorative artists having knowledge of the composition of ornament, and of the materials for which they were called upon to design. Lace pattern books were published in considerable quantity in Italy, France, and Germany during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and from these the lace-makers worked. Many lace-makers would, no doubt, derive benefit from practice in drawing, in discriminating between well and badly shaped forms. But the skill they are primarily required to show and to develop is one of fine fingers in reproducing beautiful forms in threads. The conception, arrangement, and drawing of beautiful forms for a design have to be

undertaken by decorative artists acquainted with the limitations of those materials and methods which the ultimate expression of the design involves.

This lovely Irish art of lace-making is very much indebted to Mr. Cole, who has really recreated it, given it new life, and shown it the true artistic lines on which to progress. Hardly £20,000 a year is spent by England upon Irish laces, and almost all of this goes upon the cheaper and commoner kinds. And yet, as Mr. Cole points out, it is possible to produce Irish laces of as high artistic quality as almost any foreign laces. The Queen, Lady Londonderry, Lady Dorothy Nevill, Mrs. Alfred Morrison, and others, have done much to encourage the Irish workers, and it rests largely with the ladies of England whether this beautiful art lives or dies. The real good of a piece of lace, says Mr. Ruskin, is "that it should show, first, that the designer of it had a pretty fancy; next, that the maker of it had fine fingers; lastly, that the wearer of it has worthiness or dignity enough to obtain what is difficult to obtain, and common sense enough not to wear it on all occasions."

"The High-Caste Hindu Woman" (George Bell

& Sons) is an interesting book. It is from the pen of the Pundita Ramabai Sarasvati, and the introduction is written by Miss Rachel Bodley, M.D., the Dean of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania. The story of the parentage of this learned lady is very curious. A certain Hindu, being on a religious pilgrimage with his family, which consisted of his wife and two daughters, one nine and the other seven years of age, stopped in a town to rest for a day or two. One morning, the Hindu was bathing in the sacred river Godavari, near the town, when he saw a fine-looking man coming there to bathe, also. After the ablution and the morning prayers were over, the father inquired of the stranger who he was and whence he came. On learning his caste, and clan, and dwelling place, and also that he was a widower, he offered him his little daughter of nine in marriage. All things were settled in an hour or so; next day the marriage was concluded, and the little girl placed in the possession of the stranger, who took her nearly nine hundred miles away from her home and gave her into the charge of his mother. The stranger was the learned Ananta Shastri, a Brahman pundit, who had very advanced views on the subject of woman's education, and he

determined that he would teach his girl-wife Sanskrit, and give her the intellectual culture that had been always denied to women in India. Their daughter was the Pundita Ramabai, who, after the death of her parents, travelled all over India advocating the cause of female education, and to whom seems to be due the first suggestion for the establishment of the profession of women doctors. In 1866, Miss Mary Carpenter made a short tour in India for the purpose of finding out some way by which women's condition in that country might be improved. She at once discovered that the chief means by which the desired end could be accomplished was by furnishing women teachers for the Hindu Zenanas. She suggested that the British Government should establish normal schools for training women teachers, and that scholarships should be awarded to girls in order to prolong their school-going period, and to assist indigent women who would otherwise be unable to pursue their studies. In response to Miss Carpenter's appeal, upon her return to England, the English Government founded several schools for women in India, and a few "Mary Carpenter Scholarships" were endowed by benevolent persons. These schools were open to women of every caste; but

while they have undoubtedly been of use, they have not realised the hopes of their founders, chiefly through the impossibility of keeping caste rules in them. Ramabai, in a very eloquent chapter, proposes to solve the problem in a different way. Her suggestion is that houses should be opened for the young and high-caste child-widows, where they can take shelter without the fear of losing their caste, or of being disturbed in their religious belief, and where they may have entire freedom of action as regards caste rules. The whole account given by the Pundita of the life of the high-caste Hindu lady is full of suggestion for the social reformer and the student of progress, and her book, which is wonderfully well written, is likely to produce a radical change in the educational schemes that at present prevail in India.

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A writer in the *Quarterly Review* for January, 1874, says: "No literary event since the war has excited anything like such a sensation in Paris as the publication of the *Lettres à une Inconnue.* Even politics become a secondary consideration for the hour, and academicians or deputies of opposite parties might be seen eagerly accosting each other in the Chamber or the street to imagine who

this fascinating and perplexing 'unknown' could be. The statement in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* that she was an Englishwoman, moving in brilliant society, was not supported by evidence; and M. Blanchard, the painter, from whom the publisher received the manuscripts, died most provokingly at the very commencement of the enquiry, and made no sign. Some intimate friends of Merimée, rendered incredulous by wounded self-love at not having been admitted to his confidence, insisted that there was no secret to tell; their hypothesis being that the *Inconnue* was a myth, and the letters a romance, in which some petty details of actual life had been interwoven to keep up the mystification." But an artist like Merimée would not have left his work in so unformed a state, so defaced by repetitions, or with such a want of proportion between the parts. The *Inconnue* was undoubtedly a real person, and her letters in answer to those of Merimée have just been published by Messrs. Macmillan under the title of "An Author's Love."

Her letters? Well, they are such letters as she might have written. "By the tideless sea at Cannes on a summer day," says their anonymous author, "I had fallen asleep, and the splashing of the

waves upon the shore had doubtless made me dream. When I awoke, the yellow-paper-covered volumes of Prosper Merimée's *Letters à une Inconnue* lay beside me; I had been reading the book before I fell asleep, but the answers—had they ever been written, or had I only dreamed?" The invention of the love letters of a curious and unknown personality, the heroine of one of the great literary flirtations of our age, was a clever idea, and certainly the author has carried out his scheme with wonderful success; with such success, indeed, that it is said that one of our statesmen, whose name occurs more than once in the volume, was for a moment completely taken in by what is really a *jeu-d'esprit,* the first serious joke perpetrated by Messrs. Macmillan in their publishing capacity. Perhaps it is too much to call it a joke. It is a fine, delicate piece of fiction, an imaginative attempt to complete a real romance. As we had the letters of the academic Romeo, it was obviously right that we should pretend we had the answers of the clever and somewhat *mondaine* Juliet. Or is it Juliet herself, in her little Paris boudoir, looking over these two volumes with a sad, cynical smile? Well, to be put into fiction is always a tribute to one's reality.

As for extracts from these fascinating forgeries, the letters should be read in conjunction with those of Merimée himself. It is difficult to judge of them by samples. We find the *Inconnue* first in London, probably in 1840.

"Little," she writes, "can you imagine the storm of indignation you aroused in me by your remark that your feelings for me were those suitable for a fourteen-year-old niece. *Merci.* Anything less like a respectable uncle than yourself I cannot well imagine. The *rôle* would never suit you, believe me, so do not try it.

"Now in return for your story of the phlegmatic musician animal who called forth such stormy devotion in a female breast, and who, himself cold and indifferent, was loved to the extent of a watery grave being sought by his inamorata as solace for his indifference, let me ask the question why the women who torment men with their uncertain tempers, drive them wild with jealousy, laugh contemptuously at their humble entreaties, and fling their money to the winds, have twice the hold upon their affections that the patient, long-suffering, domestic, frugal Griseldas have, whose existences are one long penance of unsuccessful

efforts to please? Answer this comprehensively, and you will have solved a riddle which has puzzled women since Eve asked questions in Paradise."

Later on she writes: "Why should all natures be alike? It would make the old saws useless if they were, and deprive us of one of the truest of them all, 'Variety is the salt of life.' How terribly monotonous it would be if all the flowers were roses, every woman a queen, and each man a philosopher! My private opinion is that it takes at least six men such as one meets every day to make one really valuable one. I like so many men for one particular quality which they possess, and so few men for all. *Comprenez vous?*" In another place: "Is it not a trifle dangerous, this experiment we are trying of a friendship in pen, ink, and paper? A letter! What thing on earth more dangerous to confide in? Written at blood-heat, it may reach its destination when the recipient's mental thermometer counts zero, and the burning words and thrilling sentences turn to ice and be congealed as they are read. A letter! The most uncertain thing in a world of uncertainties, the best or the worst thing devised by mortals." Again:

"Surely it was for you, *mon cher,* that the description given of a friend of mine was originally intended. He is a trifle cynical, this friend, and decidedly pessimistic, and of him it was reported that he never believed in anything until he saw it, and then he was convinced that it was an optical illusion. The accuracy of the description struck me." They seem to have loved each other best when they were parted.

"I think I cannot bear it much longer, this incessant quarrelling when we meet, and your unkindness during the short time that you are with me. Why not let it all end? It would be better for both of us. I do not love you less when I write these words; if you could know the sadness which they echo in my heart you would believe this. No; I think I love you more, but I cannot understand you. As you have often said, our natures must be very different, entirely different; if so, what is this curious bond between them? To me you seem possessed with some strange recklessness and morbid melancholy which utterly spoils your life, and in return you never see me without overwhelming me with reproaches, if not for one thing, for another. I tell you I cannot,

will not, bear it longer. If you love me, then in God's name cease tormenting me as well as yourself with these wretched doubts, and questionings, and complaints. I have been ill, seriously ill, and there is nothing to account for my illness save the misery of this apparently hopeless state of things existing between us. You have made me weep bitter tears of alternate self-reproach and indignation, and finally of complete miserable bewilderment as to this unhappy condition of affairs. Believe me, tears like these are not good to mingle with love; they are too bitter, too scorching; they blister love's wings and fall too heavily on love's heart. I feel worn out with a dreary sort of hopelessness; if you know a cure for pain like this, send it to me quickly."

Yet in the very next letter she says to him, "Although I said good-bye to you less than an hour ago, I cannot refrain from writing to tell you that a happy calm which seems to penetrate my whole being seems also to have wiped out all remembrance of the misery and unhappiness which has overwhelmed me lately. Why cannot it always be so, or would life, perhaps, be then too blessed, too wholly happy for it to be life? I know that

you are free to-night; will you not write to me, that the first words my eyes fall upon to-morrow shall prove that to-day has not been a dream? Yes, write to me." The letter that immediately follows is one of six words only: "Let me dream —let me dream."

In the following there are interesting touches of actuality:

"Did you ever try a cup of tea (the national beverage, by the way) at an English railway station? If you have not, I would advise you, as a friend, to continue to abstain! The names of the American drinks are rather against them; the straws are, I think, about the best part of them. You do not tell me what you think of Mr. Disraeli. I once met him at a ball at the Duke of Sutherland's, in the long picture gallery of Stafford House. I was walking with Lord Shrewsbury, and without a word of warning he stopped and introduced him, mentioning with reckless mendacity that I had read every book he had written, and admired them all; then he coolly walked off and left me standing face to face with the great statesman. He talked to me for some time, and I studied him carefully. I should say he was a man

with one steady aim; endless patience, untiring perseverance, iron concentration; marking out one straight line before him, so unbending, that, despite themselves, men stand aside as it is drawn straightly and steadily on. A man who believes that determination brings strength, strength brings endurance, and endurance brings success. You know how often in his novels he speaks of the influence of women, socially, morally, and politically, yet his manner was the least interested or deferential in talking that I have ever met with in a man of his class. He certainly thought this particular woman of singularly small account, or else the brusque and tactless allusion to his books may, perhaps, have annoyed him as it did me; but whatever the cause, when he promptly left me at the first approach of a mutual acquaintance, I felt distinctly snubbed. Of the two men, Mr. Gladstone was infinitely more agreeable in his manner; he left one with the pleasant feeling of measuring a little higher in cubic inches than one did before, than which I know no more delightful sensation. *A Paris, bientôt.*

Elsewhere we find cleverly written descriptions of life in Italy, in Algiers, at Hombourg, at

French boarding-houses; stories about Napoleon III, Guizot, Prince Gortschakoff, Montalembert, and others; political speculations, literary criticisms, and witty social scandal; and everywhere a keen sense of humour, a wonderful power of observation. As reconstructed in these letters, the *Inconnue* seems to have been not unlike Merimée himself. She had the same restless, unyielding, independent character. Each desired to analyse the other. Each, being a critic, was better fitted for friendship than for love. "We are so different," said Merimée once to her, "that we can hardly understand each other." But it was because they were so alike that each remained a mystery to the other. Yet they ultimately attained to a high attitude of loyal and faithful friendship, and from a purely literary point of view these fictitious letters give the finishing touch to the strange romance that so stirred Paris fifteen years ago. Perhaps the real letters will be published some day. When they are, how interesting to compare them!

"The Bird-Bride," by Graham R. Tomson (Longmans, Green & Co.), is a collection of romantic ballads, delicate sonnets, and metrical stud-

ies in foreign fanciful forms. The poem that gives its title to the book is the lament of an Eskimo hunter over the loss of his wife and children.

"Years agone, on the flat, white strand,
I won my sweet sea-girl;
Wrapped in my coat of the snow-white fur,
I watched the wild birds settle and stir,
The grey gulls gather and whirl.

"One, the greatest of all the flock,
Perched on an ice-floe bare,
Called and cried as her heart were broke,
And straight they were changed, that fleet bird-folk,
To women young and fair.

"Swift I sprang from my hiding-place
And held the fairest fast;
I held her fast, the sweet, strange thing:
Her comrades skirled, but they all took wing,
And smote me as they passed.

"I bore her safe to my warm snow house;
Full sweetly there she smiled;
And yet whenever the shrill winds blew,
She would beat her long white arms anew,
And her eyes glanced quick and wild.

"But I took her to wife, and clothed her warm
With skins of the gleaming seal;
Her wandering glances sank to rest
When she held a babe to her fair warm breast,
And she loved me dear and leal.

"Together we tracked the fox and the seal,
And at her behest I swore
That bird and beast my bow might slay
For meat and for raiment, day by day,
But never a grey gull more."

Famine comes upon the land, and the hunter, forgetting his oath, slays four seagulls for food. The bird-wife "shrills out in a woeful cry," and taking the plumage of the dead birds, she makes wings for her children and for herself, and flies away with them.

" 'Babes of mine, of the wild winds kin,
Feather ye quick, nor stay.
Oh, oho! but the wild winds blow!
Babes of mine, it is time to go:
Up, dear hearts, and away!'

"And lo! the grey plumes covered them all;
Shoulder and breast and brow.
I felt the wind of their whirling flight:
Was it sea or sky? was it day or night?
It is always night-time now.

"Dear, will you never relent, come back?
I loved you long and true.
O winged white wife, and our children three,
Of the wild wind's kin though you surely be,
Are ye not of my kin too?

"Ay, ye once were mine, and, till I forget,
Ye are mine for ever and aye,
Mine, wherever your wild wings go,
While shrill winds whistle across the snow
And the skies are blear and grey."

Some powerful and strong ballads follow, many of which, such as "The Cruel Priest," "The Deid Folks' Ferry," and "Marchen," are in that curious combination of Scotch and Border dialect so much affected now by our modern poets. Certainly dialect is dramatic. It is a vivid method of recreating a past that never existed. It is something between "A Return to Nature" and "A Re-

turn to the Glossary." It is so artificial that it is really *naïve*. From the point of view of mere music, much may be said for it. Wonderful diminutives lend new notes of tenderness to the song. There are possibilities of fresh rhymes, and in search for a fresh rhyme poets may be excused if they wander from the broad high-road of classical utterance into devious byways and less trodden paths. Sometimes one is tempted to look on dialect as expressing simply the pathos of provincialisms, but there is more in it than mere mispronunciations. With the revival of an antique form often comes the revival of an antique spirit. Through limitations that are sometimes uncouth, and always narrow, comes Tragedy herself; and though she may stammer in her utterance, and deck herself in cast-off weeds and trammelling raiment, still we must hold ourselves in readiness to accept her, so rare are her visits to us now, so rare her presence in an age that demands a happy ending from every play, and that sees in the theatre merely a source of amusement. The form, too, of the ballad—how perfect it is in its dramatic unity! It is so perfect that we must forgive it its dialect, if it happens to speak in that strange tongue.

"Then by cam' the bride's company
With torches burning bright;
'Tak' up, tak' up your bonny bride
A' in the mirk midnight!'

"Oh, wan, wan was the bridegroom's face,
And wan, wan was the bride,
But clay-cauld was the young mess-priest
That stood them two beside!

"Saying 'Rax me out your hand, Sir Knight,
And wed her with this ring:'
And the deid bride's hand it was so cauld
As ony earthly thing.

"The priest he touched that lady's hand,
And never a word he said;
The priest he touched that lady's hand,
And his ain was wet and red!

"The priest he lifted his ain right hand,
And the red blood dripped and fell.
Says, 'I loved ye, lady, and ye loved me;
Sae I took your life mysel'.'

"Oh! red, red was the dawn o' day,
And tall was the gallows-tree:
The Southland lord to his ain has fled,
And the mess-priest's hangit hie!"

Of the sonnets, this to Herodotus is worth quoting:

"Far-travelled coaster of the midland seas,
What marvels did those curious eyes behold!
Winged snakes, and carven labyrinths of old;
The emerald column raised to Herakles;
King Perseus' shrine upon the Chemmian leas;
Four-footed fishes, decked with gems and gold;
But thou didst leave some secrets yet untold,
And veiled the dread Osirian mysteries.

"But now the golden asphodels among
Thy footsteps fare, and to the lordly dead
Thou tellest all the stories left unsaid
Of secret rites and runes forgotten long,
Of that dark folk who ate the Lotus-bread
And sang the melancholy Linus-song."

Mrs. Tomson has certainly a very refined sense of form. Her verse, especially in the series enti-

tled "New Words to Old Tunes," has grace and distinction. Some of the shorter poems are, to use a phrase made classical by Mr. Pater, "little carved ivories of speech." She is one of our most artistic workers in poetry, and treats language as a fine material.

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES.

The Princess Christian's translation of "The Memoirs of Wilhelmine, Margravine of Bayreuth" (David Stott), is a most fascinating and delightful book. The Margravine and her brother, Frederick the Great, were, as the Princess herself points out in an admirably written introduction, "among the first of those questioning minds that strove after spiritual freedom" in the last century. "They had studied," says the Princess, "the English philosophers, Newton, Locke, and Shaftesbury, and were roused to enthusiasm by the writings of Voltaire and Rousseau. Their whole lives bore the impress of the influence of French thought on the burning questions of the day. In the eighteenth century began that great struggle of philosophy against tyranny and worn-out abuses which culminated in the French Revolution. The noblest minds were engaged in the struggle, and, like most reformers, they pushed their conclusions to extremes, and too often lost sight of the need of a

due proportion in things. The Margravine's influence on the intellectual development of her country is untold. She formed at Bayreuth a centre of culture and learning which had before been undreamt of in Germany."

The historical value of these "Memoirs" is, of course, well known. Carlyle speaks of them as being "by far the best authority" on the early life of Frederick the Great. But considered merely as the autobiography of a clever and charming woman, they are no less interesting, and even those who care nothing for eighteenth-century politics, and look upon history itself as an unattractive form of fiction, cannot fail to be fascinated by the Margravine's wit, vivacity, and humour, by her keen powers of observation, and by her brilliant and assertive egotism. Not that her life was by any means a happy one. Her father, to quote the Princess Christian, "ruled his family with the same harsh despotism with which he ruled his country, taking pleasure in making his power felt by all in the most galling manner," and the Margravine and her brother "had much to suffer, not only from his ungovernable temper, but also from the real privations to which they were subjected." Indeed, the picture the Margravine gives of the

King is quite extraordinary. "He despised all learning," she writes, "and wished me to occupy myself with nothing but needlework and household duties or details. Had he found me writing or reading, he would probably have whipped me. He considered music a capital offence, and maintained that every one should devote himself to one object: men to the military service, and women to their household duties. Science and the arts he counted among the seven deadly sins." Sometimes he took to religion, "and then," says the Margravine, "we lived like Trappists, to the great grief of my brother and myself. Every afternoon the King preached a sermon, to which we had to listen as attentively as if it proceeded from an Apostle. My brother and I were often seized with such an intense sense of the ridiculous, that we burst out laughing, upon which an apostolic curse was poured out on our heads, which we had to accept with a show of humility and penitence." Economy and soldiers were his only topics of conversation; his chief social amusement was to make his guests intoxicated; and as for his temper, the accounts the Margravine gives of it would be almost incredible if they were not amply corroborated from other sources. Suetonius has written of the

strange madness that comes on kings, but even in his melodramatic chronicles there is hardly anything that rivals what the Margravine has to tell us. Here is one of her pictures of family life at a Royal Court in the last century, and it is not by any means the worst scene she describes:

"On one occasion, when his temper was more than usually bad, he told the Queen that he had received letters from Anspach, in which the Margrave announced his arrival in Berlin for the beginning of May. He was coming there for the purpose of marrying my sister, and one of his Ministers would arrive previously with the betrothal ring. My father asked my sister whether she were pleased with the prospect, and how she would arrange her household. Now, my sister had always made a point of telling him whatever came into her head, even the greatest home-truths, and he had never taken her outspokenness amiss. On this occasion, therefore, relying on former experience, she answered him as follows: 'When I have a house of my own, I shall take care to have a well appointed dinner table, better than yours is; and if I have children of my own, I shall not plague them as you do yours, and force them to

eat things they thoroughly dislike.' 'What is amiss with my dinner table?' the King enquired, getting very red in the face. 'You ask what is the matter with it?' my sister replied. 'There is not enough on it for us to eat, and what there is is cabbage and carrots, which we detest.' Her first answer had already angered my father, but now he gave vent to his fury. But instead of punishing my sister, he poured it all on my mother, my brother, and myself. To begin with, he threw a plate at my brother's head, who would have been struck had he not got out of the way; a second one he threw at me, which I also happily escaped; then torrents of abuse followed these first signs of hostility. He reproached the Queen with having brought up her children so badly. 'You will curse your mother,' he said to my brother, 'for having made you such a good-for-nothing creature.' . . . As my brother and I passed near him to leave the room he hit out at us with his crutch. Happily, we escaped the blow, for it would certainly have struck us down, and we at last escaped without harm."

Yet, as the Princess Christian remarks, "despite the almost cruel treatment Wilhelmine received

from her father, it is noticeable that throughout her 'Memoirs' she speaks of him with the greatest affection. She makes constant reference to his 'good heart,' and that his faults 'were more those of temper than of nature.' Nor could all the misery and wretchedness of her home life dull the brightness of her intellect. What would have made others morbid made her satirical. Instead of weeping over her own personal tragedies, she laughs at the general comedy of life. Here, for instance, is her description of Peter the Great and his wife, who arrived at Berlin in 1718:

"The Czarina was small, broad, and brown-looking, without the slightest dignity or appearance. You had only to look at her to detect her low origin. She might have passed for a German actress, she had decked herself out in such a manner. Her dress had been bought second-hand, and was trimmed with some dirty-looking silver embroidery; the bodice was covered with precious stones, arranged in such a manner as to represent the double eagle. She wore a dozen Orders, and round the bottom of her dress hung quantities of relics and pictures of saints, which rattled when she walked, and reminded one of a smartly harnessed

mule. The Orders, too, made a great noise, knocking against each other.

"The Czar, on the other hand, was tall and well grown, with a handsome face; but his expression was coarse, and impressed one with fear. He wore a simple sailor's dress. His wife, who spoke German very badly, called her Court jester to her aid, and spoke Russian with her. This poor creature was a Princess Gallitzin, who had been obliged to undertake this sorry office to save her life, as she had been mixed up in a conspiracy against the Czar, and had twice been flogged with the knout!

"The following day the Czar visited all the sights of Berlin, amongst others the very curious collection of coins and antiques. Amongst these last named was a statue representing a heathen god. It was anything but attractive, but was the most valuable in the collection. The Czar admired it very much, and insisted on the Czarina kissing it. On her refusing, he said to her, in bad German, that she should lose her head if she did not at once obey him. Being terrified at the Czar's anger, she immediately complied without the least hesitation. The Czar asked the King to give him this and other statues, a request which he could

not refuse. The same thing happened about a cupboard, inlaid with amber. It was the only one of its kind, and had cost King Frederick I an enormous sum, and the consternation was general on its having to be sent to Petersburg.

"This barbarous Court happily left after two days. The Queen rushed at once to Monbijou, which she found in a state resembling that of the fall of Jerusalem. I never saw such a sight. Everything was destroyed, so that the Queen was obliged to rebuild the whole house."

Nor are the Margravine's descriptions of her reception as a bride in the principality of Bayreuth less amusing. Hof was the first town she came to, and a deputation of nobles was waiting there to welcome her. This is her account of them:

"Their faces would have frightened little children, and, to add to their beauty, they had arranged their hair to resemble the wigs that were then in fashion. Their dresses clearly denoted the antiquity of their families, as they were composed of heirlooms, and were cut accordingly, so that most of them did not fit. In spite of their costumes being the 'Court Dresses,' the gold and silver trimmings were so black that you had a diffi-

culty in making out of what they were made. The manners of these nobles suited their faces and their clothes. They might have passed for peasants. I could scarcely restrain my laughter when I first beheld these strange figures. I spoke to each in turn, but none of them understood what I said, and their replies sounded to me like Hebrew, because the dialect of the Empire is quite different from that spoken in Brandenburg.

"The clergy also presented themselves. These were totally different creatures. Round their necks they wore great ruffs, which resembled washing-baskets. They spoke very slowly, so that I might be able to understand them better. They said the most foolish things, and it was only with much difficulty that I was able to prevent myself from laughing. At last I got rid of all these people, and we sat down to dinner. I tried my best to converse with those at table, but it was useless. At last I touched on agricultural topics, and then they began to thaw. I was at once informed of all their different farmsteads and herds of cattle. An almost interesting discussion took place as to whether the oxen in the upper part of the country were fatter than those in the lowlands.

"I was told that, as the next day was Sunday,

I must spend it at Hof, and listen to a sermon. Never before had I heard such a sermon! The clergyman began by giving us an account of all the marriages that had taken place from Adam's time to that of Noah. We were spared no detail, so that the gentlemen all laughed and the poor ladies blushed. The dinner went off as on the previous day. In the afternoon all the ladies came to pay me their respects. Gracious heavens! what ladies, too! They were all as ugly as the gentlemen, and their head-dresses were so curious that swallows might have built their nests in them!"

As for Bayreuth, and its pretty Court, the picture she gives of it is exceedingly curious. Her father-in-law, the reigning Margrave, was a narrow-minded mediocrity, whose conversation "resembled that of a sermon read aloud for the purpose of sending the listener to sleep," and who had only two topics, "Telemachus, and Amelot de la Houssaye's 'Roman History.'" The Ministers, from Baron von Stein, who always said "yes" to everything, to Baron von Voit, who always said "no," were not by any means an intellectual set of men. "Their chief amusement," says the Margravine, "was drinking from morning till night,

and horses and cattle were all they talked about." The palace itself was shabby, decayed, and dirty. "I was like a lamb among wolves," cries the poor Margravine; "I was settled in a strange country, at a Court which more resembled a peasant's farm, surrounded by coarse, bad, dangerous, and tiresome people."

Yet her *esprit* never deserted her. She is always clever, witty, and entertaining. Her stories about the endless squabbles over precedence are extremely amusing. The society of her day cared very little for good manners, knew, indeed, very little about them, but all questions of etiquette were of vital importance, and the Margravine herself, though she saw the shallowness of the whole system, was far too proud not to assert her rights when circumstances demanded it, as the description she gives of her visit to the Empress of Germany shows very clearly. When this meeting was first proposed the Margravine declined positively to entertain the idea. "There was no precedent," she writes, "of a King's daughter and an Empress having met, and I did not know to what rights I ought to lay claim." Finally, however, she is induced to consent, but she lays down three conditions for her reception:

"I desired, first of all, that the Empress's Court should receive me at the foot of the stairs; secondly, that she should meet me at the door of her bedroom; and thirdly, that she should offer me an armchair to sit on.

"They disputed all day over the conditions I had made. The first two were granted me, but all that could be obtained with respect to the third was that the Empress would use quite a small armchair, whilst she gave me a chair.

"Next day I saw this Royal personage. I own that had I been in her place I would have made all the rules of etiquette and ceremony the excuse for not being obliged to appear. The Empress was small and stout, round as a ball, very ugly, and without dignity or manner. Her mind corresponded to her body. She was terribly bigoted, and spent her whole day praying. The old and ugly are generally the Almighty's portion. She received me trembling all over, and was so upset that she could not say a word.

"After some silence I began the conversation in French. She answered me in her Austrian dialect that she could not speak that language, and begged I would speak in German. The conversation did not last long, for the Austrian and low

Saxon tongues are so different from each other that to those acquainted with only one the other is unintelligible. This is what happened to us. A third person would have laughed at our misunderstandings, for we caught only a word here and there, and had to guess the rest. The poor Empress was such a slave to etiquette that she would have thought it high treason had she spoken to me in a foreign language, though she understood French quite well."

Many other extracts might be given from this delightful book, but from the few that have been selected some idea can be formed of the vivacity and picturesqueness of the Margravine's style. As for her character, it is very well summed up by the Princess Christian, who, while admitting that she often appears almost heartless and inconsiderate, yet claims that, "taken as a whole, she stands out in marked prominence among the most gifted women of the eighteenth century, not only by her mental powers, but by her goodness of heart, her self-sacrificing devotion, and true friendship." An interesting sequel to her "Memoirs" would be her correspondence with Voltaire, and it is to be hoped that we may shortly see a translation of these let-

ters from the same accomplished pen to which we owe the present volume.

"Women's Voices" (Walter Scott) is an anthology of the most characteristic poems by English, Scotch, and Irish women, selected and arranged by Mrs. William Sharp. "The idea of making this anthology," says Mrs. Sharp, in her preface, "arose primarily from the conviction that our women poets had never been collectively represented with anything like adequate justice; that the works of many are not so widely known as they deserve to be; and that at least some fine fugitive poetry could be thus rescued from oblivion"; and Mrs. Sharp proceeds to claim that "the selections will further emphasise the value of women's work in poetry for those who are already well acquainted with English literature, and that they will convince many it is as possible to form an anthology of 'pure poetry' from the writings of women as from those of men." It is somewhat difficult to define what "pure poetry" really is, but the collection is certainly extremely interesting, extending, as it does, over nearly three centuries of our literature. It opens with "Revenge," a poem by "the learned, virtuous, and truly noble ladie," Elizabeth

Carew, who published a "Tragedie of Mariam, the Faire Queene of Jewry," in 1613, from which "Revenge" is taken. Then come some pretty verses by Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, who produced a volume of poems in 1673. They are supposed to be sung by a sea goddess, and their fantastic charm and the graceful wilfulness of their fancy are well worthy of note, as these first stanzas show:

"My cabinets are oyster-shells,
In which I keep my Orient pearls;
And modest coral I do wear,
Which blushes when it touches air.

"On silvery waves I sit and sing,
And then the fish lie listening;
Then resting on a rocky stone,
I comb my hair with fishes' bone;

"The whilst Apollo with his beams
Doth dry my hair from soaking streams,
His light doth glaze the water's face
And make the sea my looking-glass."

Then follow "Friendship's Mystery," by "The Matchless Orinda," Mrs. Katharine Philips; a

"Song," by Mrs. Aphra Behn, the first Englishwoman who adopted literature as a profession; and the Countess of Winchelsea's "Nocturnal Reverie." Wordsworth once said that, with the exception of this poem and Pope's "Windsor Forest," the poetry of the period intervening between "Paradise Lost" and "The Seasons" does not contain a single new image of external Nature, and though the statement is hardly accurate, as it leaves Gay entirely out of account, it must be admitted that the simple naturalism of Lady Winchelsea's description is extremely remarkable. Passing on through Mrs. Sharp's collection, we come across poems by Lady Grisell Baillie; by Jean Adams, a poor serving-maid in a Scotch manse, who died in the Greenock Workhouse; by Isobel Pagan, an Ayrshire "lucky," who kept an alehouse, sold whisky without a license, and sang her own songs as a means of subsistence; by Mrs. Thrale, Dr. Johnson's friend; by Mrs. Hunter, the wife of the great anatomist; by the worthy Mrs. Barbauld; and by the excellent Miss Hannah More. Here are Miss Anna Seward, called by her admirers "The Swan of Lichfield," who was so angry with Dr. Darwin for plagiarising some of her verses; Lady Anne Barnard, whose "Auld Robin Gray" was described

by Sir Walter Scott as "worth all the dialogues Corydon and Phyllis have together spoken from the days of Theocritus downwards"; Jean Glover, a Scottish weaver's daughter, who married a strolling player, and became the best actor and singer of the troupe; Joanna Baillie, whose tedious dramas thrilled our grandfathers; Mrs. Tighe, whose "Psyche" was very much admired by Keats in his youthful days; Frances Kemble, Mrs. Siddons' niece; poor L. E. L., whom Disraeli described as "the personification of Brompton, pink satin dress, white satin shoes, red cheeks, snub nose, and her hair *à la* Sappho"; the two beautiful sisters, Lady Dufferin and Mrs. Norton; Emily Brontë, whose poems are instinct with tragic power, and quite terrible in their bitter intensity of passion, the fierce fire of feeling seeming almost to consume the raiment of form; Eliza Cook, a kindly, vulgar writer; George Eliot, whose poetry is too abstract, and lacks all rhythmical life; Mrs. Carlyle, who wrote much better poetry than her husband, though this is hardly high praise; and Mrs. Browning, the first really great poetess in our literature. Nor are contemporary writers forgotten. Christina Rossetti, some of whose poems are quite priceless in their beauty; Mrs. Augusta Webster, Mrs.

Hamilton King, Miss Mary Robinson, Mrs. Craik: Jean Ingelow, whose sonnet on "A Chess-King" is like an exquisitely carved gem; Mrs. Pfeiffer; Miss May Probyn, a poetess with the true lyrical impulse of song, whose work is as delicate as it is delightful; Mrs. Nesbit, a very pure and perfect artist; Miss Rosa Mulholland, Miss Katharine Tynan, Lady Charlotte Elliot, and many other well-known writers, are duly and adequately represented. On the whole, Mrs. Sharp's collection is very pleasant reading indeed, and the extracts given from the works of living poetesses are extremely remarkable, not merely for their absolute artistic excellence, but also for the light they throw upon the spirit of modern culture.

It is not, however, by any means a complete anthology. Dame Juliana Berners is possibly too antiquated in style to be suitable to a modern audience. But where is Anne Askew, who wrote a ballad in Newgate; and where is Queen Elizabeth, whose "most sweet and sententious ditty" on Mary Stuart is so highly praised by Puttenham as an example of "Exargasia," or The Gorgeous in Literature? Why is the Countess of Pembroke excluded? Sidney's sister should surely have a place in any anthology of English verse. Where is Sid-

ney's niece, Lady Mary Wroth, to whom Ben Jonson dedicated the "Alchemist"? Where is "the noble ladie Diana Primrose," who wrote "A Chain of Pearl, or a memorial of the peerless grace and heroic virtues of Queen Elizabeth, of glorious memory"? Where is Mary Morpeth, the friend and admirer of Drummond of Hawthornden? Where is the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of James I; and where is Anne Killigrew, maid of honour to the Duchess of York? The Marchioness of Wharton, whose poems were praised by Waller; Lady Chudleigh, whose lines beginning—

"Wife and servant are the same,
But only differ in the name,"

are very curious and interesting; Rachael Lady Russell, Constantia Grierson, Mary Barber, Lætitia Pilkington; Eliza Haywood, whom Pope honoured by a place in the "Dunciad"; Lady Luxborough, Lord Bolingbroke's half-sister; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; Lady Temple, whose poems were printed by Horace Walpole; "Perdita," whose lines on the Snowdrop are very pathetic; the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, of whom Gibbon said that "she was made for something better than a Duch-

ess"; Mrs. Ratcliffe, Mrs. Chapone, and Amelia Opie, all deserve a place on historical, if not on artistic grounds. In fact, the space given by Mrs. Sharp to modern and living poetesses is somewhat disproportionate, and I am sure that those on whose brows the laurels are still green would not grudge a little room to those the green of whose laurels is withered and the music of whose lyres is mute.

One of the most powerful and pathetic novels that have recently appeared is "A Village Tragedy" (Bentley & Son), by Margaret L. Woods. To find any parallel to this lurid little story one must go to Dostoieffski, or to Guy de Maupassant. Not that Mrs. Woods can be said to have taken either of these two great masters of fiction as her model, but there is something in her work that recalls their method; she has not a little of their fierce intensity, their terrible concentration, their passionless yet poignant objectivity; like them, she seems to allow life to suggest its own mode of presentation; and, like them, she recognises that a frank acceptance of the facts of life is the true basis of all modern imitative art. The scene of Mrs. Woods' story lies in one of the villages near

Oxford; the characters are very few in number, and the plot is extremely simple. It is a romance of modern Arcadia—a tale of the love of a farm labourer for a girl who, though slightly above him in social station and education, is yet herself also a servant on a farm. True Arcadians they are, both of them, and their ignorance and isolation only serve to intensify the tragedy that gives the story its title. It is the fashion nowadays to label literature, so, no doubt, Mrs. Woods' novel will be spoken of as "realistic." Its realism, however, is the realism of the artist, not of the reporter; its tact of treatment, subtlety of perception, and fine distinction of style, make it rather a poem than a *procès-verbal;* and though it lays bare to us the mere misery of life, it suggests something of life's mystery also. Very delicate, too, is the handling of external Nature. There are no formal guide-book descriptions of scenery, nor anything of what Byron petulantly called "twaddling about trees," but we seem to breathe the atmosphere of the country, to catch the exquisite scent of the beanfields, so familiar to all who have ever wandered through the Oxfordshire lanes in June; to hear the birds singing in the thicket, and the sheep-bells tinkling from the hill. Characterisation, that

enemy of literary form, is such an essential part of the method of the modern writer of fiction, that Nature has almost become to the novelist what light and shade are to the painter—the one permanent element of style; and if the power of "A Village Tragedy" be due to its portrayal of human life, no small portion of its charm comes from its Theocritean setting.

It is, however, not merely in fiction and in poetry that the women of this century are making their mark. Their appearance amongst the prominent speakers at the Church Congress, some weeks ago, was in itself a very remarkable proof of the growing influence of women's opinions on all matters connected with the elevation of our national life, and the amelioration of our social conditions. When the Bishops left the platform to their wives, it may be said that a new era began, and the change will, no doubt, be productive of much good. The Apostolic dictum that women should not be suffered to teach, is no longer applicable to a society such as ours, with its solidarity of interests, its recognition of natural rights, and its universal education, however suitable it may have been to the Greek cities under Roman rule. Noth-

ing in the United States struck me more than the fact that the remarkable intellectual progress of that country is very largely due to the efforts of American women, who edit many of the most powerful magazines and newspapers, take part in the discussion of every question of public interest, and exercise an important influence upon the growth and tendencies of literature and art. Indeed, the women of America are the one class in the community that enjoys that leisure which is so necessary for culture. The men are, as a rule, so absorbed in business that the task of bringing some element of form into the chaos of daily life is left almost entirely to the opposite sex, and an eminent Bostonian once assured me that in the twentieth century the whole culture of his country would be in petticoats. By that time, however, it is probable that the dress of the two sexes will be assimilated, as similarity of costume always follows similarity of pursuits.

In a recent article in *La France,* M. Sarcey puts this point very well. The further we advance, he says, the more apparent does it become that women are to take their share as bread-winners in the world. The task is no longer monopolised by the

men, and will, perhaps, be equally shared by the sexes in another hundred years. It will be necessary, however, for women to invent a suitable costume, as their present style of dress is quite inappropriate to any kind of mechanical labour, and must be radically changed before they can compete with men upon their own ground. As to the question of desirability, M. Sarcey refuses to speak. "I shall not see the end of this revolution," he remarks, "and I am glad of it." But, as is pointed out in a very sensible article in the *Daily News*, there is no doubt that M. Sarcey has reason and common sense on his side with regard to the absolute unsuitability of ordinary feminine attire to any sort of handicraft, or even to any occupation which necessitates a daily walk to business and back again in all kinds of weather. Women's dress can easily be modified and adapted to any exigencies of this kind; but most women refuse to modify or adapt it. They must follow the fashion, whether it be convenient or the reverse. And, after all, what is a fashion? From the artistic point of view, it is usually a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months. From the point of view of science it not infrequently violates every law of health, every princi-

ple of hygiene. While from the point of view of simple ease and comfort, it is not too much to say that, with the exception of M. Felix's charming teagowns, and a few English tailor-made costumes, there is not a single form of really fashionable dress that can be worn without a certain amount of absolute misery to the wearer. The contortion of the feet of the Chinese beauty, said Dr. Naftel, at the last International Medical Congress, held at Washington, is no more barbarous or unnatural than the panoply of the *femme du monde.*

And yet how sensible is the dress of the London milkwoman, of the Irish or Scotch fishwife, of the North-Country factory girl! An attempt was made recently to prevent the pit women from working, on the ground that their costume was unsuited to their sex; but it is really only the idle classes who dress badly. Wherever physical labour of any kind is required, the costume used is, as a rule, absolutely right, for labour necessitates freedom, and without freedom there is no such thing as beauty in dress at all. In fact, the beauty of dress depends on the beauty of the human figure, and whatever limits, constrains, and mutilates is

essentially ugly, though the eyes of many are so blinded by custom that they do not notice the ugliness till it has become unfashionable.

What women's dress will be in the future it is difficult to say. The writer of the *Daily News* article is of opinion that skirts will always be worn as distinctive of the sex, and it is obvious that men's dress, in its present condition, is not by any means an example of a perfectly rational costume. It is more than probable, however, that the dress of the twentieth century will emphasise distinctions of occupation, not distinctions of sex.

It is hardly too much to say that by the death of the author of "John Halifax, Gentleman," our literature has sustained a heavy loss. Mrs. Craik was one of the finest of our women writers, and though her art had always what Keats called "a palpable intention upon one," still its imaginative qualities were of no mean order. There is hardly one of her books that has not some distinction of style; there is certainly not one of them that does not show an ardent love of all that is beautiful and good in life. The good she, perhaps, loved somewhat more than the beautiful, but her

heart had room for both. Her first novel appeared in 1849, the year of the publication of Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre" and Mrs. Gaskell's "Ruth," and her last work was done for the magazine which I have the honour to edit. She was very much interested in the scheme for the foundation of "The Woman's World," suggested its title, and promised to be one of its warmest supporters. One article from her pen is already in proof, and will appear next month; and in a letter I received from her, a few days before she died, she told me that she had almost finished a second, to be called "Between Schooldays and Marriage." Few women have enjoyed a greater popularity than Mrs. Craik, or have better deserved it. It is sometimes said that John Halifax is not a real man, but only a woman's ideal of a man. Well, let us be grateful for such ideals. No one can read the story of which John Halifax is the hero without being the better for it. Mrs. Craik will live long in the affectionate memory of all who knew her, and one of her novels, at any rate, will always have a high and honourable place in English fiction. Indeed, for simple narrative power, some of the chapters of "John Halifax, Gentleman," are almost unequalled in our prose literature.

The news of the death of Lady Brassey has been also received by the English people with every expression of sorrow and sympathy. Though her books were not remarkable for any perfection of literary style, they had the charm of brightness, vivacity, and unconventionality. They revealed a fascinating personality, and their touches of domesticity made them classics in many an English household. In all modern movements Lady Brassey took a keen interest. She gained a first-class certificate in the South Kensington School of Cookery, scullery department and all; was one of the most energetic members of the St. John's Ambulance Association, many branches of which she succeeded in founding; and, whether at Normanhurst or in Park Lane, always managed to devote some portion of her day to useful and practical work. It is sad to have to chronicle in the first number of "The Woman's World" the death of two of the most remarkable Englishwomen of our day.

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Lady Bellairs' "Gossips with Girls and Maidens" (William Blackwood & Sons) contains some very interesting essays, and a quite extraordinary amount of useful information on all matters connected with the mental and physical training of

women. It is very difficult to give good advice without being irritating, and almost impossible to be at once didactic and delightful; but Lady Bellairs manages very cleverly to steer a middle course between the Charybdis of dulness and Scylla of flippancy. There is a pleasing *intimité* about her style, and almost everything that she says has both good sense and good humour to recommend it. Nor does she confine herself to those broad generalisations on morals, which are so easy to make, so difficult to apply. Indeed, she seems to have a wholesome contempt for the cheap severity of abstract ethics, enters into the most minute details for the guidance of conduct, and draws out elaborate lists of what girls should avoid, and what they should cultivate.

Here are some specimens of "What to Avoid":

"A loud, weak, affected, whining, harsh, or shrill tone of voice.

"Extravagances in conversation—such phrases as 'Awfully this,' 'Beastly that,' 'Loads of time,' 'Don't you know,' 'hate' for 'dislike,' etc.

"Sudden exclamations of annoyance, surprise, and joy—often dangerously approaching to female swearing'—as 'Bother!' 'Gracious!' 'How jolly!'

"Yawning when listening to anyone.

"Talking on family matters, even to your bosom friends.

"Attempting any vocal or instrumental piece of music that you cannot execute with ease.

"Crossing your letters.

"Making a short, sharp nod with the head, intended to do duty as a bow.

"All nonsense in the shape of belief in dreams, omens, presentiments, ghosts, spiritualism, palmistry, etc.

"Entertaining wild flights of the imagination, or empty idealistic aspirations."

I am afraid that I have a good deal of sympathy with what are called "empty idealistic aspirations"; and "wild flights of imagination" are so extremely rare in the nineteenth century that they seem to me deserving rather of praise than of censure. The exclamation, "Bother," also, though certainly lacking in beauty, might, I think, be permitted under circumstances of extreme aggravation, such as, for instance, the rejection of a manuscript by the editor of a magazine; but in all other respects the list seems to be quite excellent. As for "What to Cultivate," nothing could be better than the following:

"An unaffected, low, distinct, silver-toned voice.

"The art of pleasing those around you, and seeming pleased with them and all they may do for you.

"The charm of making little sacrifices quite naturally, as if of no account to yourself.

"The habit of making allowances for the opinions, feelings, or prejudices of others.

"An erect carriage—that is, a sound body.

"A good memory for faces, and facts connected with them—thus avoiding giving offence through not recognising or bowing to people, or saying to them what had best been left unsaid.

"The art of listening without impatience to prosy talkers, and smiling at the twice-told tale or joke."

I cannot help thinking that the last aphorism aims at too high a standard. There is always a certain amount of danger in any attempt to cultivate impossible virtues. However, it is only fair to add that Lady Bellairs recognises the importance of self-development quite as much as the importance of self-denial; and there is a great deal of sound sense in everything that she says about the gradual growth and formation of character. In-

deed, those who have not read Aristotle upon this point might with advantage read Lady Bellairs.

Miss Constance Naden's little volume, "A Modern Apostle, and other Poems" (Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co.), shows both culture and courage —culture in its use of language, courage in its selection of subject-matter. The modern apostle of whom Miss Naden sings is a young clergyman who preaches Pantheistic Socialism in the Free Church of some provincial manufacturing town, converts everybody, except the woman whom he loves, and is killed in a street riot. The story is exceedingly powerful, but seems more suitable for prose than for verse. It is right that a poet should be full of the spirit of his age, but the external forms of modern life are hardly, as yet, expressive of that spirit. They are truths of fact, not truths of the imagination, and though they may give the poet an opportunity for realism, they often rob the poem of the reality that is so essential to it. Art, however, is a matter of result, not of theory, and if the fruit is pleasant we should not quarrel about the tree. Miss Naden's work is distinguished by rich imagery, fine colour, and sweet music, and these are things for which we

should be grateful, wherever we find them. In point of mere technical skill, her longer poems are the best; but some of the shorter poems are very fascinating. This, for instance, is pretty:

"The copyist group was gathered round
A time-worn fresco, world-renowned,
Whose central glory once had been
The face of Christ, the Nazarene.

"And every copyist of the crowd,
With his own soul that face endowed,
Gentle, severe, majestic, mean;
But which was Christ, the Nazarene?

"Then one who watched them made complaint,
And marvelled, saying, 'Wherefore paint
Till ye be sure your eyes have seen
The face of Christ, the Nazarene?' "

And this sonnet is full of suggestion:

"The wine-flushed monarch slept, but in his ear
An angel breathed—'Repent, or choose the flame
Quenchless.' In dread he woke, but not in shame,
Deep musing—'Sin I love, yet hell I fear.'

"Wherefore he left his feasts and minions dear,
And justly ruled, and died a saint in name.
But when his hasting spirit heavenward came,
A stern voice cried—'O Soul! what dost thou here?'

"'Love I foreswore, and wine, and kept my vow
To live a just and joyless life, and now
I crave reward.' The voice came like a knell—
'Fool! dost thou hope to find again thy mirth,
And those foul joys thou didst renounce on earth?
Yea, enter in! My heaven shall be thy hell.'"

Miss Constance Naden deserves a high place among our living poetesses, and this, as Mrs. Sharp has shown lately in her volume, entitled "Women's Voices," is no mean distinction.

Phyllis Browne's "Life of Mrs. Somerville" (Cassell & Co.) forms part of a very interesting little series, called "The World's Workers"—a collection of short biographies catholic enough to include personalities so widely different as Turner and Richard Cobden, Handel and Sir Titus Salt, Robert Stephenson and Florence Nightingale, and yet possessing a certain definite aim. As a mathe-

matician and a scientist, the translator and populariser of Laplace's *La Mécanique Céleste,* and the author of an important book on physical geography, Mrs. Somerville is, of course, well known. The scientific bodies of Europe covered her with honours; her bust stands in the hall of the Royal Society, and one of the Women's Colleges at Oxford bears her name. Yet, considered simply in the light of a wife and a mother, she is no less admirable; and those who consider that stupidity is the proper basis for the domestic virtues, and that intellectual women must of necessity be helpless with their hands, cannot do better than read Phyllis Browne's pleasant little book, in which they will find that the greatest woman mathematician of any age was a clever needlewoman, a good housekeeper, and a most skilful cook. Indeed, Mrs. Somerville seems to have been quite renowned for her cookery. The discoverers of the North-West Passage christened an island "Somerville," not as a tribute to the distinguished mathematician, but as a recognition of the excellence of some orange marmalade which the distinguished mathematician had prepared with her own hands and presented to the ships before they left England; and to the fact that she was able to make currant

jelly at a very critical moment she owed the affection of some of her husband's relatives, who up to that time had been rather prejudiced against her on the ground that she was merely an unpractical Blue-stocking.

Nor did her scientific knowledge ever warp or dull the tenderness and humanity of her nature. For birds and animals she had always a great love. We hear of her as a little girl watching with eager eyes the swallows as they built their nests in summer or prepared for their flight in the autumn; and when snow was on the ground she used to open the windows to let the robins hop in and pick crumbs on the breakfast table. On one occasion she went with her father on a tour in the Highlands, and found on her return that a pet goldfinch, which had been left in the charge of the servants, had been neglected by them and had died of starvation. She was almost heart-broken at the event, and in writing her "Recollections" seventy years after, she mentioned it, and said that as she wrote she felt deep pain. Her chief pet in her old age was a mountain sparrow, which used to perch on her arm and go to sleep there while she was writing. One day the sparrow fell into the water-jug and was drowned, to the great grief

of its mistress, who could hardly be consoled for its loss, though later on we hear of a beautiful paroquet taking the place of *le moineau d'Uranie,* and becoming Mrs. Somerville's constant companion. She was also very energetic, Phyllis Browne tells us, in trying to get a law passed in the Italian Parliament for the protection of animals, and said once, with reference to this subject: "We English cannot boast of humanity so long as our sportsmen find pleasure in shooting down tame pigeons as they fly, terrified, out of a cage"—a remark with which I entirely agree. Mr. Herbert's bill for the protection of land birds gave her immense pleasure, though, to quote her own words, she was "grieved to find that 'the lark, which at heaven's gate sings,' is thought unworthy of man's protection"; and she took a great fancy to a gentleman who, on being told of the number of singing birds that are eaten in Italy—nightingales, goldfinches, and robins—exclaimed, in horror: "What! robins—our household birds! I would as soon eat a child!" Indeed, she believed to some extent in the immortality of animals, on the ground that, if animals have no future, it would seem as if some were created for uncompensated misery—an idea which does not seem to me to be either extravagant

or fantastic, though it must be admitted that the optimism on which it is based receives absolutely no support from science.

On the whole, Phyllis Browne's book is very pleasant reading. Its only fault is that it is far too short, and this is a fault so rare in modern literature that it almost amounts to a distinction. However, Phyllis Browne has managed to crowd into the narrow limits at her disposal a great many interesting anecdotes. The picture she gives of Mrs. Somerville working away at her translation of Laplace in the same room with her children is very charming, and reminds one of what is told of George Sand; there is an amusing account of Mrs. Somerville's visit to the widow of the young Pretender, the Countess of Albany, who, after talking with her for some time, exclaimed: "So you don't speak Italian! You must have had a very bad education!" And this story about the Waverley Novels may possibly be new to some of my readers:

"A very amusing circumstance in connection with Mrs. Somerville's acquaintance with Sir Walter arose out of the childish inquisitiveness of Woronzow Greig, Mrs. Somerville's little boy.

"During the time Mrs. Somerville was visiting Abbotsford, the Waverley Novels were appearing, and were creating a great sensation; yet even Scott's intimate friends did not know that he was the author; he enjoyed keeping the affair a mystery. But little Woronzow discovered what he was about. One day, when Mrs. Somerville was talking about a novel that had just been published, Woronzow said: 'I knew all these stories long ago, for Mr. Scott writes on the dinner-table; when he has finished, he puts the green cloth with the papers in a corner of the dining-room, and when he goes out, Charlie Scott and I read the stories.'"

Phyllis Browne remarks that this incident shows "that persons who want to keep a secret ought to be very careful when children are about"; but the story seems to me to be far too charming to require any moral of the kind.

Bound up in the same volume is a life of Miss Mary Carpenter, also written by Phyllis Browne. Miss Carpenter does not seem to me to have the charm and fascination of Mrs. Somerville. There is always something about her that is formal, limited, and precise. When she was about two years

old she insisted on being called "Doctor Carpenter" in the nursery; at the age of twelve she is described by a friend as a sedate little girl, who always spoke like a book; and before she entered on her educational schemes she wrote down a solemn dedication of herself to the service of humanity. However, she was one of the practical, hard-working saints of the nineteenth century, and it is, no doubt, quite right that the saints should take themselves very seriously. It is only fair, also, to remember that her work of rescue and reformation was carried on under great difficulties. Here, for instance, is the picture Miss Cobbe gives us of one of the Bristol night schools:

"It was a wonderful spectacle to see Mary Carpenter sitting patiently before the large school gallery in St. Jane's Back, teaching, singing, and praying with the wild street boys, in spite of endless interruptions caused by such proceedings as shooting marbles at any object behind her, whistling, stamping, fighting, shrieking out 'Amen' in the middle of a prayer, and sometimes rising *en masse,* and tearing, like a troop of bisons in hob-nailed shoes, down from the gallery, round the great school-room, and down the stairs, and into

the street. These irrepressible outbreaks she bore with infinite good-humour."

Her own account is somewhat pleasanter, and shows that "the troop of bisons in hob-nailed shoes" were not always so barbarous:

"I had taken to my class on the preceding week some specimens of ferns, neatly gummed on white paper. . . . This time I took a piece of coal-shale, with impressions of ferns, to show them. I told each to examine the specimen and tell me what he thought it was. W——— gave so bright a smile that I saw he knew; none of the others could tell; he said they were ferns, like what I showed them last week, but he thought they were chiseled on the stone. Their surprise and pleasure were great when I explained the matter to them.

"The history of Joseph. They all found a difficulty in realising that this had actually occurred. One asked if Egypt existed now, and if people lived in it. When I told them that buildings now stood which had been erected about the time of Joseph, one said that was impossible, as they must have fallen down ere this. I showed them the form of a pyramid, and they were satisfied. *One asked if all books were true.*

"The story of Macbeth impressed them very much. They knew the name of Shakespeare, having seen it over a public-house.

"A boy defined conscience as 'a thing a gentleman hasn't got who, when a boy finds his purse and gives it back to him, doesn't give the boy sixpence.'

"Another boy was asked, after a Sunday evening lecture on 'Thankfulness,' what pleasure he enjoyed most in the course of a year. He replied, candidly, 'Cock-fightin', Ma'am; there's a pit up by the "Black Boy" as is worth anythink in Brissel.'"

There is something a little pathetic in the attempt to civilise the rough street boy by means of the refining influence of ferns and fossils, and it is difficult not to help feeling that Miss Carpenter rather over-estimated the value of elementary education. The poor are not to be fed upon facts. Even Shakespeare and the Pyramids are not sufficient; nor is there much use in giving them the results of culture, unless we also give them those conditions under which culture can be realised. In these cold, crowded cities of the North, the proper basis for morals, using the word in its wide

Hellenic signification, is to be found in architecture, not in books.

Still, it would be ungenerous not to recognise that Mary Carpenter gave to the children of the poor not merely her learning, but her love. In early life, her biographer tells us, she had longed for the happiness of being a wife and a mother; but later she became content that her affection could be freely given to all who needed it, and the verse in the prophecies, "I have given thee children whom thou hast not borne," seemed to her to indicate what was to be her true mission. Indeed, she rather inclined to Bacon's opinion, that unmarried people do the best public work. "It is quite striking," she says in one of her letters, "to observe how much the useful power and influence of woman has developed of late years. Unattached ladies, such as widows and unmarried women, have quite ample work to do in the world for the good of others to absorb all their powers. Wives and mothers have a very noble work given them by God, and want no more." The whole passage is extremely interesting, and the phrase "unattached ladies" is quite delightful, and reminds one of Charles Lamb.

"Ismay's Children" (Macmillan & Co.) is by the clever authoress of that wonderful little story, "Flitters, Tatters, and the Counsellor," a story which delighted the realists by its truth, fascinated Mr. Ruskin by its beauty, and remains to the present day the most perfect picture of street arab life in all English prose fiction. The scene of the novel is laid in the south of Ireland, and the plot is extremely dramatic and ingenious. Godfrey Mauleverer, a reckless young Irishman, runs away with Ismay Darcy, a pretty, penniless governess, and is privately married to her in Scotland. Some time after the birth of her third child, Ismay died, and her husband, who has never made his marriage public, nor taken any pains to establish the legitimacy of his children, is drowned while yachting off the coast of France. The care of Ismay's children then devolves on an old aunt, Miss Juliet Darcy, who brings them back to Ireland to claim their inheritance for them. But a sudden stroke of paralysis deprives her of her memory, and she forgets the name of the little Scotch village in which Ismay's informal marriage took place. So Tighe O'Malley holds Barrettstown, and Ismay's children live in an old mill close to the great park of which they are the rightful heirs.

The boy, who is called Godfrey, after his father, is a fascinating study, with his swarthy foreign beauty, his fierce moods of love and hate, his passionate pride, and his passionate tenderness. The account of his midnight ride to warn his enemy of an impending attack of Moonlighters is most powerful and spirited; and it is pleasant to meet in modern fiction a character that has all the fine inconsistencies of life, and is neither too fantastic an exception to be true, nor too ordinary a type to be common. Excellent also, in its direct simplicity of rendering, is the picture of Miss Juliet Darcy; and the scene in which, at the moment of her death, the old woman's memory returns to her is quite admirable, both in conception and in treatment. To me, however, the chief interest of the book lies in the little life-like sketches of Irish character with which it abounds. Modern realistic art has not yet produced a Hamlet, but at least it may claim to have studied Guildenstern and Rosencrantz very closely; and, for pure fidelity and truth to nature, nothing could be better than the minor characters in "Ismay's Children." Here we have the kindly old priest who arranges all the marriages in his parish, and has a strong objection to people who insist on making long confessions;

the important young curate, fresh from Maynooth, who gives himself more airs than a bishop, and has to be kept in order; the professional beggars, with their devout faith, their grotesque humour, and their incorrigible laziness; the shrewd shopkeeper, who imports arms in flour barrels for the use of the Moonlighters, and, as soon as he has got rid of them, gives information of their whereabouts to the police; the young men who go out at night to be drilled by an Irish-American; the farmers with their wild land-hunger, bidding secretly against each other for every vacant field; the dispensary doctor, who is always regretting that he has not got a Trinity College degree; the plain girls, who want to go into convents; the pretty girls, who want to get married; and the shopkeepers' daughters, who want to be thought young ladies. There is a whole pell-mell of men and women, a complete panorama of provincial life, an absolutely faithful picture of the peasant in his own home. This note of realism in dealing with national types of character has always been a distinguishing characteristic of Irish fiction, from the days of Miss Edgeworth down to our own days, and it is not difficult to see in "Ismay's Children" some traces of the influence of "Castle

Rackrent." I fear, however, that few people read Miss Edgeworth nowadays, though both Scott and Tourgenieff acknowledged their indebtedness to her novels, and her style is always admirable in its clearness and precision.

Miss Leffler-Arnim's statement, in a lecture delivered recently at St. Saviour's Hospital, that "she had heard of instances where ladies were so determined not to exceed the fashionable measurement that they had actually held on to a cross-bar while their maids fastened the fifteen-inch corset," has excited a good deal of incredulity, but there is nothing really improbable in it. From the sixteenth century to our own day there is hardly any form of torture that has not been inflicted on girls, and endured by women, in obedience to the dictates of an unreasonable and monstrous Fashion. "In order to obtain a real Spanish figure," says Montaigne, "what a Gehenna of suffering will not women endure, drawn in and compressed by great *coches* entering the flesh; nay, sometimes they even die thereof!" "A few days after my arrival at school," Mrs. Somerville tells us in her memoirs, "although perfectly straight and well made, I was enclosed in stiff stays, with a steel

busk in front; while above my frock, bands drew my shoulders back until the shoulder-blades met. Then a steel rod with a semi-circle, which went under my chin, was clasped to the steel busk in my stays. In this constrained state I and most of the younger girls had to prepare our lessons"; and in the Life of Miss Edgeworth we read that, being sent to a certain fashionable establishment, "she underwent all the usual tortures of backboards, iron collars, and dumbs, and also (because she was a very tiny person) the unusual one of being hung by the neck to draw out the muscles and increase the growth," a signal failure in her case. Indeed, instances of absolute mutilation and misery are so common in the past that it is unnecessary to multiply them; but it is really sad to think that in our own day a civilised woman can hang on to a cross-bar while her maid laces her waist into a fifteen-inch circle. To begin with, the waist is not a circle at all, but an oval; nor can there be any greater error than to imagine that an unnaturally small waist gives an air of grace, or even of slightness, to the whole figure. Its effect, as a rule, is to simply exaggerate the width of the shoulders and the hips; and those whose figures possess that stateliness which is called stoutness by

the vulgar, convert what is a quality into a defect by yielding to the silly edicts of Fashion on the subject of tight-lacing. The fashionable English waist, also, is not merely far too small, and consequently quite out of proportion to the rest of the figure, but it is worn far too low down. I use the expression "worn" advisedly, for a waist nowadays seems to be regarded as an article of apparel to be put on when and where one likes. A long waist always implies shortness of the lower limbs, and, from the artistic point of view, has the effect of diminishing the height; and I am glad to see that many of the most charming women in Paris are returning to the idea of the Directoire style of dress. This style is not by any means perfect, but at least it has the merit of indicating the proper position of the waist. I feel quite sure that all Englishwomen of culture and position will set their faces against such stupid and dangerous practices as are related by Miss Leffler-Arnim. Fashion's motto is, *Il faut souffrir pour être belle;* but the motto of art and of common sense is, *Il faut être bête pour souffrir.*

Talking of Fashion, a critic in the *Pall Mall Gazette* expresses his surprise that I should have

allowed an illustration of a hat, covered with "the bodies of dead birds," to appear in the first number of "The Woman's World"; and as I have received many letters on the subject, it is only right that I should state my exact position in the matter. Fashion is such an essential part of the *mundus muliebris* of our day, that it seems to me absolutely necessary that its growth, development, and phases should be duly chronicled; and the historical and practical value of such a record depends entirely upon its perfect fidelity to fact. Besides, it is quite easy for the children of light to adapt almost any fashionable form of dress to the requirements of utility and the demands of good taste. The Sarah Bernhardt teagown, for instance, figured in the present issue, has many good points about it, and the gigantic dress-improver does not appear to me to be really essential to the mode; and though the Postilian costume of the fancy dress ball is absolutely detestable in its silliness and vulgarity, the so-called Late Georgian costume in the same plate is rather pleasing. I must, however, protest against the idea that to chronicle the development of Fashion implies any approval of the particular forms that Fashion may adopt.

Mrs. Craik's article on the condition of the English stage will, I feel sure, be read with great interest by all who are watching the development of dramatic art in this country. It was the last thing written by the author of "John Halifax, Gentleman," and reached me only a few days before her lamented death. That the state of things is such as Mrs. Craik describes, few will be inclined to deny; though, for my own part, I must acknowledge that I see more vulgarity than vice in the tendencies of the modern stage; nor do I think it possible to elevate dramatic art by limiting its subject-matter. *On tué une littérature quand on lui interdit la vérité humaine.* As far as the serious presentation of life is concerned, what we require is more imaginative treatment, greater freedom from theatric language and theatric convention. It may be questioned, also, whether the consistent reward of virtue and punishment of wickedness be really the healthiest ideal for an art that claims to mirror nature. However, it is impossible not to recognise the fine feeling that actuates every line of Mrs. Craik's article; and though one may venture to disagree with the proposed method, one cannot but sympathise with the purity

and delicacy of the thought, and the high nobility of the aim.

The French Minister of Education, M. Spüller, has paid Racine a very graceful and appropriate compliment in naming after him the second college that has been opened in Paris for the higher education of girls. Racine was one of the privileged few who were allowed to read the celebrated *Traité de l'Education des Filles* before it appeared in print; he was charged, along with Boileau, with the task of revising the text of the constitution and rules of Madame de Maintenon's great college; it was for the Demoiselles de St. Cyr that he composed *Athalie;* and he devoted a great deal of his time to the education of his own children. The Lycée Racine will, no doubt, become as important an institution as the Lycée Fenelon, and the speech delivered by M. Spüller on the occasion of its opening was full of the happiest augury for the future. M. Spüller dwelt at great length on the value of Goethe's aphorism, that the test of a good wife is her capacity to take her husband's place, and to become a father to his children, and mentioned that the thing that struck him most in America was the wonderful Brooklyn Bridge, a superb Ti-

tanic structure, which was completed under the direction of the engineer's wife, the engineer himself having died while the building of the bridge was in progress. *"Il me semble,"* said M. Spüller, *"que la femme de l'ingénieur du pont de Brooklyn à réalisé la pensée de Goethe, et que non seulement elle est devenue un père pour ses enfants, mais un autre père pour l'œuvre admirable, vraiment unique, qui à immortalisé le nom qu'elle portrait avec son mari."* M. Spüller also laid great stress on the necessity of a thoroughly practical education, and was extremely severe on the "Blue-stockings" of literature. *"Il ne s'agit pas de former ici des 'femmes savantes.' Les 'femmes savantes' ont été marquées pour jamais par un des plus grands génies de notre race d'une légère teinte de ridicule. Non, ce n'est pas des femmes savantes que nous voulons: ce sont tout simplement des femmes: des femmes dignes de ce pays de France, qui est la patrie du bons sens, de la mesure, et de la grâce; des femmes ayant le notion juste et le sens exquis du rôle qui doit leur appartenir dans la société moderne."* There is, no doubt, a great deal of truth in M. Spüller's observations, but we must not mistake a caricature for the reality. After all, "Les Précieuses Ridicules" contrasted very favour-

ably with the ordinary type of womanhood of their day, not merely in France, but also in England; and an uncritical love of sonnets is preferable, on the whole, to coarseness, vulgarity, and ignorance.

I am glad to see that Miss Ramsay's brilliant success at Cambridge is not destined to remain an isolated instance of what women can do in intellectual competitions with men. At the Royal University in Ireland, the Literature Scholarship, of £100 a year for five years, has been won by Miss Story, the daughter of a North of Ireland clergyman. It is pleasant to be able to chronicle an item of Irish news that has nothing to do with the violence of party politics or party feeling, and that shows how worthy women are of that higher culture and education which has been so tardily and, in some instances, so grudgingly granted to them.

The Empress of Japan has been ordering a whole wardrobe of fashionable dresses in Paris for her own use and the use of her ladies-in-waiting. The chrysanthemum (the imperial flower of Japan) has suggested the tints of most of the Empress's own gowns, and in accordance with the colour schemes of other flowers the rest of the cos-

tumes have been designed. The same steamer, however, that carries out the masterpieces of M. Worth and M. Felix to the Land of the Rising Sun, also brings to the Empress a letter of formal and respectful remonstrance from the English Rational Dress Society. I trust that, even if the Empress rejects the sensible arguments of this important Society, her own artistic feeling may induce her to reconsider her resolution to abandon Eastern for Western costume.

I hope that some of my readers will interest themselves in the Ministering Children's League, for which Mr. Walter Crane has done the beautiful and suggestive design of "The Young Knight." The best way to make children good is to make them happy, and happiness seems to me an essential part of Lady Meath's admirable scheme.

Mme. Ristori's "Etudes et Souvenirs" (Paul Ollendorff: Paris) is one of the most delightful books on the stage that have appeared since Lady Martin's charming volume on the Shakespearean heroines. It is often said that actors leave nothing behind them but a barren name and a withered wreath; that they subsist simply upon the applause

of the moment; that they are ultimately doomed to the oblivion of old play-bills; and that their art, in a word, dies with them, and shares their own mortality. "Chippendale, the cabinet-maker," says the clever author of "Obiter Dicta," "is more potent than Garrick the actor. The vivacity of the latter no longer charms (save in Boswell); the chairs of the former still render rest impossible in a hundred homes." This view, however, seems to me to be exaggerated. It rests on the assumption that acting is simply a mimetic art, and takes no account of its imaginative and intellectual basis. It is quite true, of course, that the personality of the player passes away, and with it that pleasure-giving power by virtue of which the art exists. Yet the artistic method of a great actor survives. It lives on in tradition, and becomes part of the science of a school. It has all the intellectual life of a principle. In England, at the present moment, the influence of Garrick on our actors is far stronger than that of Reynolds on our painters of portraits, and if we turn to France it is easy to discern the tradition of Talma, but where is the tradition of David?

Mme. Ristori's memoirs, then, have not merely the charm that always attaches to the autobiog-

raphy of a brilliant and beautiful woman, but have also a definite and distinct artistic value. Her analysis of the character of Lady Macbeth, for instance, is full of psychological interest, and shows us that the subtleties of Shakespearean criticism are not necessarily confined to those who have views on weak endings and rhyming tags, but may also be suggested by the art of acting itself. The author of "Obiter Dicta" seeks to deny to actors all critical insight, and all literary appreciation. The actor, he tells us, is art's slave, not her child, and lives entirely outside literature, "with its words for ever on his lips, and none of its truths engraven on his heart." But this seems to me to be a harsh and reckless generalisation. Indeed, so far from agreeing with it, I would be inclined to say that the mere artistic process of acting, the translation of literature back again into life, and the presentation of thought under the conditions of action, is in itself a critical method of a very high order; nor do I think that a study of the careers of our great English actors will really sustain the charge of want of literary appreciation. It may be true that actors pass too quickly away from the form, in order to get at the feeling that gives the form beauty and colour, and that, where

the literary critic studies the language, the actor looks simply for the life; and yet, how well the great actors have appreciated that marvellous music of words which in Shakespeare, at any rate, is so vital an element of poetic power, if, indeed, it be not equally so in the case of all who have any claim to be regarded as true poets. "The sensual life of verse," says Keats, in a dramatic criticism published in *The Champion*, "springs warm from the lips of Kean, and to one learned in Shakespearean hieroglyphics, learned in the spiritual portion of those lines to which Kean adds a sensual grandeur, his tongue must seem to have robbed the Hybla bees and left them honeyless." This particular feeling, of which Keats speaks, is familiar to all who have heard Salvini, Sarah Bernhardt, Ristori, or any of the great artists of our day, and it is a feeling that one cannot, I think, gain by merely reading the passage to oneself. For my own part, I must confess that it was not until I heard Sarah Bernhardt in *Phèdre* that I absolutely realised the sweetness of the music of Racine. As for Mr. Birrell's statement that actors have the words of literature for ever on their lips, but none of its truths engraved on their hearts, all that one can say is that, if it be true, it is a

defect which actors share with the majority of literary critics.

The account Mme. Ristori gives of her own struggles, voyages, and adventures, is very pleasant reading indeed. The child of poor actors, she made her first appearance when she was three months old, being brought on in a hamper as a New Year's gift to a selfish old gentleman who would not forgive his daughter for having married for love. As, however, she began to cry long before the hamper was opened, the comedy became a farce, to the immense amusement of the public. She next appeared in a mediæval melodrama, being then three years of age, and was so terrified at the machinations of the villain that she ran away at the most critical moment. However, her stage fright seems to have soon disappeared, and we find her playing Silvio Pellico's *Francesca da Rimini,* at fifteen, and at eighteen making her *début* as Marie Stuart. At this time the naturalism of the French method was gradually displacing the artificial elocution and academic poses of the Italian school of acting. Mme. Ristori seems to have tried to combine simplicity with style, and the passion of nature with the self-restraint of the artist. *"J'ai voulu fondre les deux manières,"* she

tells us, "*car je sentais que toutes choses étant susceptibles de progrès, l'art dramatique aussi était appelé à subir des transformations.*" The natural development, however, of the Italian drama was almost arrested by the ridiculous censorship of plays then existing in each town under Austrian or Papal rule. The slightest allusion to the sentiment of nationality, or the spirit of freedom, was prohibited. Even the word *patria* was regarded as treasonable, and Mme. Ristori tells us an amusing story of the indignation of a censor who was asked to license a play in which a dumb man returns home after an absence of many years, and on his entrance upon the stage makes gestures expressive of his joy in seeing his native land once more. "Gestures of this kind," said the censor, "are obviously of a very revolutionary tendency, and cannot possibly be allowed. The only gestures that I could think of permitting would be gestures expressive of a dumb man's delight in scenery generally." The stage directions were accordingly altered, and the word "landscape" substituted for "native land"! Another censor was extremely severe on an unfortunate poet who had used the expression "the beautiful Italian sky," and explained to him that "the beautiful Lombardo-Venetian

sky" was the proper official expression to use. Poor Gregory, in *Romeo and Juliet,* had to be rechristened, because Gregory is a name dear to the Popes; and the—

> "Here I have a pilot's thumb,
> Wrecked as homeward he did come,"

of the first witch in Macbeth was ruthlessly struck out as containing an obvious allusion to the steersman of St. Peter's bark. Finally, bored and bothered by the political and theological Dogberrys of the day, with their inane prejudices, their solemn stupidity, and their entire ignorance of the conditions necessary for the growth of sane and healthy art, Mme. Ristori made up her mind to leave the stage. She, however, was extremely anxious to appear once before a Parisian audience, Paris being at that time the centre of dramatic activity, and after some consideration left Italy for France in the year 1855. There she seems to have been a great success, particularly in the part of Myrrha; classical without being cold, artistic without being academic, she brought to the interpretation of the character of Alfieri's great heroine the colour element of passion, the form-element of style. Jules

Janin was loud in his praises, the Emperor begged Ristori to join the troupe of the Comédie Française, and Rachel, with the strange, narrow jealousy of her nature, trembled for her laurels. Myrrha was followed by Marie Stuart, and Marie Stuart by Medea. In the latter part Mme. Ristori excited the greatest enthusiasm. Ary Scheffer designed her costumes for her; and the Niobe that stands in the Uffizzi Gallery at Florence, suggested to Mme. Ristori her famous pose in the scene with the children. She would not consent, however, to remain in France, and we find her subsequently playing in almost every country in the world from Egypt to Mexico, from Denmark to Honolulu. Her representations of classical plays seem to have been always immensely admired. When she played at Athens, the King offered to arrange for a performance in the beautiful old theatre of Dionysos, and during her tour in Portugal she produced Medea before the University of Coimbra. Her description of the latter engagement is extremely interesting. On her arrival at the University she was received by the entire body of the undergraduates, who still wear a costume almost mediæval in character. Some of them came on the stage in the course of the play as the handmaidens of

Creusa, hiding their black beards beneath heavy veils, and as soon as they had finished their parts they took their places gravely among the audience, to Mme. Ristori's horror, still in their Greek dress, but with their veils thrown back, and smoking long cigars. *"Ce n'est pas la première fois,"* she says, *"que j'ai du empêcher, par un effort de volonté, la tragédie de se terminer en farce."* Very interesting, also, is her account of the production of Montanelli's *Camma,* and she tells an amusing story of the arrest of the author by the French police on the charge of murder, in consequence of a telegram she sent to him in which the words "body of the victim" occurred. Indeed, the whole book is full of cleverly written stories and admirable criticisms on dramatic art. I have quoted from the French version, which happens to be the one that lies before me, but whether in French or Italian, the book is one of the most fascinating autobiographies that has appeared for some time, even in an age like ours, when literary egotism has been brought to such an exquisite pitch of perfection.

"The New Purgatory, and other Poems" (Fisher Unwin), by Miss E. R. Chapman, is, in some re-

spects, a very remarkable little volume. It used to be said that women were too poetical by nature to make great poets, too receptive to be really creative, too well satisfied with mere feeling to search after the marble splendour of form. But we must not judge of woman's poetic power by her achievements in days when education was denied to her, for where there is no faculty of expression no art is possible. Mrs. Browning, the first great English poetess, was also an admirable scholar, though she may not have put the accents on her Greek, and even in those poems that seem most remote from classical life, such as "Aurora Leigh," for instance, it is not difficult to trace the fine literary influence of a classical training. Since Mrs. Browning's time, education has become, not the privilege of a few women, but the inalienable inheritance of all; and, as a natural consequence of the increased faculty of expression thereby gained, the women-poets of our day hold a very high literary position. Curiously enough, their poetry is, as a rule, more distinguished for strength than for beauty; they seem to love to grapple with the big intellectual problems of modern life; science, philosophy, and metaphysics, form a large portion of their ordinary subject-matter; they leave the trivi-

ality of triolets to men, and try to read the writing on the wall, and to solve the last secret of the Sphinx. Hence, Robert Browning, not Keats, is their idol; "Sordello" moves them more than the "Ode on a Grecian Urn"; and all Lord Tennyson's magic and music seems to them as nothing compared with the psychological subtleties of "The Ring and the Book," or the pregnant questions stirred in the dialogue between Blougram and Gigabids. Indeed, I remember hearing a charming young Girtonian, forgetting for a moment the exquisite lyrics in "Pippa Passes," and the superb blank verse of "Men and Women," state quite seriously that the reason she admired the author of "Red-cotton Night-cap Country" was that he had headed a reaction against beauty in poetry!

Miss Chapman is probably one of Mr. Browning's disciples. She does not imitate him, but it is easy to discern his influence on her verse, and she has caught something of his fine, strange faith. Take, for instance, her poem, "A Strong-minded Woman":

"See her? Oh, yes—Come this way—hush! this
way,
Here she is lying,

Sweet—with the smile her face wore yesterday,
As she lay dying.
Calm, the mind-fever gone, and, praise God! gone
All the heart-hunger;
Looking the merest girl at forty-one—
You guessed her younger?
Well, she'd the flower-bloom that children have,
Was lithe and pliant,
With eyes as innocent blue as they were brave,
Resolved, defiant.
Yourself—you worship art! Well, at that shrine
She bowed too lowly,
Drank thirstily of beauty, as of wine,
Proclaimed it holy.
But could you follow her when, in a breath,
She knelt to science,
Vowing to truth true service to the death,
And heart-reliance?
Nay—then for you she underwent eclipse,
Appeared as alien
As once, before he prayed, those ivory lips
Seemed to Pygmalion.

* * * * *

Hear from your heaven, my dear, my lost delight,
You who were woman

To your heart's heart, and not more pure, more
white,
Than warmly human.
How shall I answer? How express, reveal
Your true life-story?
How utter, if they cannot guess—not feel
Your crowning glory?
This way. Attend my words. The rich, we know,
Do into heaven
Enter but hardly; to the poor, the low,
God's kingdom given.
Well, there's another heaven—a heaven on earth—
(That's love's fruition)
Whereto a certain lack—a certain dearth—
Gains best admission.
Here, too, she was too rich—ah, God! if less
Love had been lent her!—
Into the realm of human happiness
These look—not enter."

Well, here we have, if not quite an echo, at least a reminiscence of the metre of "The Grammarian's Funeral"; and the peculiar blending together of lyrical and dramatic forms seems essentially characteristic of Mr. Browning's method. Yet there is a distinct personal note running all through the

poem, and true originality is to be found rather in the use made of a model than in the rejection of all models and masters. *Dans l'art comme dans la nature on est toujours fils de quelqu'un,* and we should not quarrel with the reed if it whispers to us the music of the lyre. A little child once asked me if it was the nightingale who taught the linnets how to sing.

Miss Chapman's other poems contain a great deal that is interesting. The most ambitious is "The New Purgatory," to which the book owes its title. It is a vision of a strange garden in which, cleansed and purified of all stain and shame, walk Judas of Cherioth, Nero the Lord of Rome, Ysabel the wife of Ahab, and others, around whose names cling terrible memories of horror, or awful splendours of sin. The conception is fine, but the treatment is hardly adequate. There are, however, some good, strong lines in it, and, indeed, almost all of Miss Chapman's poems are worth reading, if not for their absolute beauty, at least for their intellectual intention.

Nothing is more interesting than to watch the change and development of the art of novel-writing in this nineteenth century—"this so-called nine-

teenth century," as an impassioned young orator once termed it, after a contemptuous diatribe against the evils of modern civilisation. In France they have had one great genius, Balzac, who invented the modern method of looking at life; and one great artist, Flaubert, who is the impeccable master of style; and to the influence of these two men we may trace almost all contemporary French fiction. But in England we have had no schools worth speaking of. The fiery torch lit by the Brontës has not been passed on to other hands; Dickens has only influenced journalism; Thackeray's delightful superficial philosophy, superb narrative power, and clever social satire have found no echoes; nor has Trollope left any direct successors behind him—a fact which is not much to be regretted, however, as, admirable though Trollope undoubtedly is for rainy afternoons and tedious railway journeys, from the point of view of literature he is merely the perpetual curate of Pudlington Parva. As for George Meredith, who could hope to reproduce him? His style is chaos illumined by brilliant flashes of lightning. As a writer he has mastered everything, except language; as a novelist he can do everything, except tell a story; as an artist he is everything, except

articulate. Too strange to be popular, too individual to have imitators, the author of "Richard Feverel" stands absolutely alone. It is easy to disarm criticism, but he has disarmed the disciple. He gives us his philosophy through the medium of wit, and is never so pathetic as when he is humorous. To turn truth into a paradox is not difficult, but George Meredith makes all his paradoxes truths, and no Theseus can thread his labyrinth, no Œdipus solve his secret.

However, it is only fair to acknowledge that there are some signs of a school springing up amongst us. This school is not native, nor does it seek to reproduce any English master. It may be described as the result of the realism of Paris filtered through the refining influence of Boston. Analysis, not action, is its aim; it has more psychology than passion, and it plays very cleverly upon one string, and this is the commonplace.

As a reaction against this school, it is pleasant to come across a novel like Lady Augusta Noel's "Hithersea Mere" (Macmillan & Co.). If this story has any definite defect, it comes from its delicacy and lightness of treatment. An industrious Bostonian would have made half a dozen

novels out of it, and have had enough left for a serial. Lady Augusta Noel is content to vivify her characters, and does not care about vivisection; she suggests rather than explains; and she does not seek to make life too obviously rational. Romance, picturesqueness, charm—these are the qualities of her book. As for its plot, it has so many plots that it is difficult to describe them. We have the story of Rhona Somerville, the daughter of a great popular preacher, who tries to write her father's life, and, on looking over his papers and early diaries, finds struggle where she expected calm, and doubt where she looked for faith, and is afraid to keep back the truth, and yet dares not publish it. Rhona is quite charming; she is like a little flower that takes itself very seriously, and she shows us how thoroughly nice and natural a narrow-minded girl may be. Then we have the two brothers, John and Adrian Mowbray. John is the hard-working, vigorous clergyman, who is impatient of all theories, brings his faith to the test of action, not of intellect, lives what he believes, and has no sympathy for those who waver or question—a thoroughly admirable, practical, and extremely irritating man. Adrian is the fascinating *dilettanté,* the philosophic doubter, a sort

of romantic rationalist with a taste for art. Of course, Rhona marries the brother who needs conversion, and their gradual influence on each other is indicated by a few subtle touches. Then we have the curious story of Olga, Adrian Mowbray's first love. She is a wonderful and mystical girl, like a little maiden out of the Sagas, with the blue eyes and fair hair of the North. An old Norwegian nurse is always at her side, a sort of Lapland witch, who teaches her how to see visions and to interpret dreams. Adrian mocks at this superstition, as he calls it, but as a consequence of disregarding it, Olga's only brother is drowned skating, and she never speaks to Adrian again. The whole story is told in the most suggestive way, the mere delicacy of the touch making what is strange seem real. The most delightful character in the whole book, however, is a girl called Hilary Marston, and hers, also, is the most tragic tale of all. Hilary is like a little woodland faun, half Greek and half gipsy; she knows the note of every bird, and the haunt of every animal; she is terribly out of place in a drawing-room, but is on intimate terms with every young poacher in the district; squirrels come and sit on her shoulder, which is pretty, and she carries ferrets in her pock-

ets, which is dreadful; she never reads a book, and has not got a single accomplishment; but she is fascinating and fearless, and wiser, in her own way, than any pedant or bookworm. This poor little English Dryad falls passionately in love with a great, blind, helpless hero, who regards her as a sort of pleasant tomboy; and her death is most touching and pathetic. Lady Augusta Noel has a charming and winning style, her descriptions of Nature are quite admirable, and her book is one of the most pleasantly written novels that has appeared this winter.

Miss Alice Corkran's "Margery Merton's Girlhood" (Blackie & Son) has the same lightness of touch and grace of treatment. Though ostensibly meant for young people, it is a story that all can read with pleasure, for it is true without being harsh, and beautiful without being affected, and its rejection of the stronger and more violent passions of life is artistic rather than ascetic. In a word, it is a little piece of true literature, as dainty as it is delicate, and as sweet as it is simple. Margery Merton is brought up in Paris by an old maiden aunt, who has an elaborate theory of education, and strict ideas about discipline. Her sys-

tem is an excellent one, being founded on the science of Darwin and the wisdom of Solomon, but it comes to terrible grief when put into practice; and finally she has to procure a governess, Madame Réville, the widow of a great and unappreciated French painter. From her Margery gets her first feeling for art, and the chief interest of the book centres round a competition for an art scholarship, into which Margery and the other girls of the convent school enter. Margery selects Joan of Arc as her subject; and, rather to the horror of the good nuns, who think that the saint should have her golden aureole, and be as gorgeous and as ecclesiastical as bright paints and bad drawing can make her, the picture represents a common peasant girl, standing in an old orchard, and listening in ignorant terror to the strange voices whispering in her ear. The scene in which she shows her sketch for the first time to the art master and the Mother Superior is very cleverly rendered indeed, and shows considerable dramatic power.

Of course, a good deal of opposition takes place, but ultimately Margery has her own way, and, in spite of a wicked plot set on foot by a jealous competitor, who persuades the Mother Superior that the picture is not Margery's own work, she

succeeds in winning the prize. The whole account of the gradual development of the conception in the girl's mind, and the various attempts she makes to give her dream its perfect form, is extremely interesting, and, indeed, the book deserves a place among what Sir George Trevelyan has happily termed "the art-literature" of our day. Mr. Ruskin in prose, and Mr. Browning in poetry, were the first who drew for us the workings of the artist soul, the first who led us from the painting or statue to the hand that fashioned it, and the brain that gave it life. They seem to have made art more expressive for us, to have shown us a passionate humanity lying behind line and colour. Theirs was the seed of this new literature, and theirs, too, is its flower; but it is pleasant to note their influence on Miss Corkran's little story, in which the creation of a picture forms the dominant *motif*.

Mrs. Pfeiffer's "Women and Work" (Trübner & Co.) is a collection of most interesting essays on the relation to health and physical development of the higher education of girls, and the intellectual or more systematised effort of woman. Mrs. Pfeiffer, who writes a most admirable prose style,

deals in succession with the sentimental difficulty, with the economic problem, and with the arguments of physiologists. She boldly grapples with Professor Romanes, whose recent article in the *Nineteenth Century,* on the leading characters which mentally differentiate men and women, attracted so much attention, and produces some very valuable statistics from America, where the influence of education on health has been most carefully studied. Her book is a most important contribution to the discussion of one of the great social problems of our day. The extended activity of women is now an accomplished fact; its results are on their trial; and Mrs. Pfeiffer's excellent essays sum up the situation very completely, and show the rational and scientific basis of the movement more clearly and more logically than any other treatise I have as yet seen.

It is interesting to note that many of the most advanced modern ideas on the subject of the education of women are anticipated by Defoe in his wonderful "Essay on Projects," where he proposes that a college for women should be erected in every county in England, and ten colleges of the kind in London. "I have often thought of it," he says,

"as one of the most barbarous customs in the world that we deny the advantages of learning to women. Their youth is spent to teach them to stitch and sew, or to make baubles. They are taught to read, indeed, and perhaps to write their names, or so, and that is the height of a woman's education. And I would but ask any who slight the sex for their understanding, 'What is a man (a gentleman I mean) good for that is taught no more?' What has the woman done to forfeit the privilege of being taught? Shall we upbraid women with folly when it is only the error of this inhuman custom that hindered them being made wiser?" Defoe then proceeds to elaborate his scheme for the foundation of women's colleges, and enters into minute details about the architecture, the general curriculum, and the discipline. His suggestion that the penalty of death should be inflicted on any man who ventured to make a proposal of marriage to any of the girl students during term time possibly suggested the plot of Lord Tennyson's "Princess," so its harshness may be excused, and in all other respects his ideas are admirable. I am glad to see that this curious little volume forms one of the National Library series. In its antici-

pations of many of our most modern inventions it shows how thoroughly practical all dreamers are.

I am sorry to see that Mrs. Fawcett deprecates the engagement of ladies of education as dressmakers and milliners, and speaks of it as being detrimental to those who have fewer educational advantages. I myself would like to see dressmaking regarded not merely as a learned profession, but as a fine art. To construct a costume that will be at once rational and beautiful requires an accurate knowledge of the principles of proportion, a thorough acquaintance with the laws of health, a subtle sense of colour, and a quick appreciation of the proper use of materials, and the proper qualities of pattern and design. The health of a nation depends very largely on its mode of dress; the artistic feeling of a nation should find expression in its costume quite as much as in its architecture; and just as the upholstering tradesman has had to give place to the decorative artist, so the ordinary milliner, with her lack of taste and lack of knowledge, her foolish fashions and her feeble inventions, will have to make way for the scientific and artistic dress designer. Indeed, so far from it being wise to discourage women of education from

taking up the profession of dressmakers, it is exactly women of education who are needed, and I am glad to see in the new technical college for women at Bedford, millinery and dressmaking are to be taught as part of the ordinary curriculum. There has also been a Society of Lady Dressmakers started in London, for the purpose of teaching educated girls and women, and the Scientific Dress Association is, I hear, doing very good work in the same direction.

I have received some very beautiful specimens of Christmas books from Messrs. Griffith & Farran. "Treasures of Art and Song," edited by Robert Ellice Mack, is a real *édition de luxe* of pretty poems and pretty pictures; and "Through the Year" is a wonderfully artistic calendar.

Messrs. Hildesheimer & Faulkner have also sent me "Rhymes and Roses," illustrated by Ernest Wilson and St. Clair Simmons; "Cape Town Dicky," a child's book, with some very lovely pictures by Miss Alice Havers; a wonderful edition of "The Deserted Village," illustrated by Mr. Charles Gregory and Mr. Hines; and some really charming Christmas cards, those by Miss Alice

Havers, Miss Edwards, and Miss Dealy being especially good.

The most perfect and the most poisonous of all modern French poets once remarked that a man can live for three days without bread, but that no one can live for three days without poetry. This, however, can hardly be said to be a popular view, or one that commends itself to that curiously uncommon quality which is called common sense. I fancy that most people, if they do not actually prefer a salmi to a sonnet, certainly like their culture to repose on a basis of good cookery, and as there is something to be said for this attitude, I am glad to see that several ladies are interesting themselves in cookery classes. Mrs. Marshall's brilliant lectures are, of course, well known, and besides her there is Mme. Lebour-Fawssett, who holds weekly classes in Kensington. Mme. Fawssett is the author of an admirable little book, entitled "Economical French Cookery for Ladies," and I am glad to hear that her lectures are so successful. I was talking the other day to a lady who works a great deal at the East-End of London, and she told me that no small part of the permanent misery of the poor is due to their entire ignorance of the

cleanliness and economy necessary for good cooking.

The Popular Ballad Concert Society has been reorganised under the name of the Popular Musical Union. Its object will be to train the working classes thoroughly in the enjoyment and performance of music, and to provide the inhabitants of the crowded districts of the East-End with concerts and oratorios, to be performed, as far as possible, by trained members of the working classes; and, though money is urgently required, it is proposed to make the society to a certain degree self-supporting, by giving something in the form of high-class concerts in return for subscriptions and donations. The whole scheme is an excellent one, and I hope that the readers of "The Woman's World" will give it their valuable support. Mrs. Ernest Hart is the secretary, and the treasurer is the Rev. S. Barnett.

"Canute the Great" (George Bell & Sons), by Michael Field, is in many respects a really remarkable work of art. Its tragic element is to be found in life, not in death; in the hero's psychological development, not in his moral declension or

in any physical calamity; and the author has borrowed from modern science the idea that in the evolutionary struggle for existence the true tragedy may be that of the survivor. Canute, the rough generous Viking, finds himself alienated from his gods, his forefathers, his very dreams. With centuries of Pagan blood in his veins, he sets himself to the task of becoming a great Christian governor and lawgiver to men; and yet he is fully conscious that, while he has abandoned the noble impulses of his race, he still retains that which in his nature is most fierce or fearful. It is not by faith that he reaches after the new culture. The beautiful Christian woman whom he has made queen of his life and lands teaches him no mercy, and knows nothing of forgiveness. It is sin and not suffering that purifies him—mere sin itself. "Be not afraid," he says in the last great scene of the play:

"Be not afraid;
I have learnt this, sin is a mighty bond
'Twixt God and man. Love that has ne'er forgiven
Is virgin and untender; spousal passion
Becomes acquainted with life's vilest things,
Transmutes them, and exalts. Oh, wonderful,

This touch of pardon,—all the shame cast out;
The heart a-ripple with the gaiety,
The leaping consciousness that Heaven knows all,
And yet esteems us royal. Think of it—
The joy, the hope!"

This strange and powerful conception is worked out in a manner as strong as it is subtle; and, indeed, almost every character in the play seems to suggest some new psychological problem. The mere handling of the verse is essentially characteristic of our modern introspective method, as it presents to us, not thought in its perfected form, but the involutions of thought seeking for expression. We seem to witness the very workings of the mind, and to watch the passion struggling for utterance. In plays of this kind (plays that are meant to be read, not to be acted) it must be admitted that we often miss that narrative and descriptive element which in the epic is so great a charm, and, indeed, may be said to be almost essential to the perfect literary presentation of any story. This element the Greeks managed to retain by the introduction of chorus and messenger; but we seem to have been unable to invent any substitute for it. That there is here a distinct loss

cannot, I think, be denied. There is something harsh, abrupt, and inartistic in such a stage-direction as "Canute strangles Edric, flings his body into the stream, and gazes out." It strikes no dramatic note, it conveys no picture, it is meagre and inadequate. If acted, it might be fine; but as read, it is unimpressive. However, there is no form of art that has not got its limitations, and though it is sad to see the action of a play relegated to a formal footnote, still there is undoubtedly a certain gain in psychological analysis and psychological concentration.

It is a far cry from the Knutlinga Saga to Rossetti's note-book, but Michael Field passes from one to the other without any loss of power. Indeed, most readers will probably prefer "The Cup of Water," which is the second play in this volume, to the earlier historical drama. It is more purely poetical; and if it has less power, it has certainly more beauty. Rossetti conceived the idea of a story in which a young king falls passionately in love with a little peasant girl who gives him a cup of water, and is by her beloved in turn, but being betrothed to a noble lady, he yields her in marriage to his friend, on condition that once a year—on the anniversary of their meeting—she bring him

a cup of water. The girl dies in childbirth, leaving a daughter who grows into her mother's perfect likeness, and comes to meet the king when he is hunting. Just, however, as he is about to take the cup from her hand, a second figure, in her exact likeness, but dressed in peasant's clothes, steps to her side, looks in the king's face, and kisses him on the mouth. He falls forward on his horse's neck, and is lifted up dead. Michael Field has struck out the supernatural element so characteristic of Rossetti's genius, and in some other respects modified for dramatic purposes material Rossetti left unused. The result is a poem of exquisite and pathetic grace. Cara, the peasant girl, is a creation as delicate as it is delightful, and it deserves to rank beside the Faun of "Callirhöe. As for the young king who loses all the happiness of his life through one noble moment of unselfishness, and who recognises as he stands over Cara's dead body that

> "———women are not chattels,
> To deal with as one's generosity
> May prompt or straiten. . . ."

and that

> "———we must learn
> To drink life's pleasures if we would be pure,"

he is one of the most romantic figures in all modern dramatic work. Looked at from a purely technical point of view, Michael Field's verse is sometimes lacking in music, and has no sustained grandeur of movement; but it is extremely dramatic, and its method is admirably suited to express those swift touches of nature and sudden flashes of thought which are Michael Field's distinguishing qualities. As for the moral contained in these plays, work that has the rich vitality of life has always something of life's mystery also; it cannot be narrowed down to a formal creed, nor summed up in a platitude; it has many answers, and more than one secret.

Miss Frances Martin's "Life of Elizabeth Gilbert" (Macmillan & Co.) is an extremely interesting book. Elizabeth Gilbert was born at a time when, as her biographer reminds us, kindly and intelligent men and women could gravely implore the Almighty to "take away" a child merely because it was blind; when they could argue that to teach the blind to read, or to attempt to teach them to work, was to fly in the face of Providence; and her whole life was given to the endeavour to overcome this prejudice and superstition; to show that

blindness, though a great privation, is not necessarily a disqualification, and that blind men and women can learn, labour, and fulfil all the duties of life. Before her day all that the blind were taught was to commit texts from the Bible to memory. She saw that they could learn handicrafts, and be made industrious and self-supporting. She began with a small cellar in Holborn, at the rent of eighteen pence a week, but before her death she could point to large and well appointed workshops in almost every city of England where blind men and women are employed, where tools have been invented by or modified for them, and where agencies have been established for the sale of their work. The whole story of her life is full of pathos and of beauty. She was not born blind, but lost her sight through an attack of scarlet fever when she was three years old. For a long time she could not realise her position, and we hear of the little child making earnest appeals to be taken "out of the dark room," or to have a candle lighted; and once she whispered to her father, "If I am a very good little girl, may I see my doll to-morrow?" However, all memory of vision seems to have faded from her before she left the sick-room, though, taught by those around her, she soon began to take

an imaginary interest in colour, and a very real one in form and texture. An old nurse is still alive who remembers making a pink frock for her when she was a child, her delight at its being pink, and her pleasure in stroking down the folds; and when in 1835 the young Princess Victoria visited Oxford with her mother, Bessie, as she was always called, came running home, exclaiming: "Oh, mamma, I have seen the Duchess of Kent, and she had on a brown silk dress." Her youthful admiration of Wordsworth was chiefly based upon his love of flowers, but also on personal knowledge. When she was about ten years old, Wordsworth went to Oxford to receive the honorary degree of D.C.L. from the University. He stayed with Dr. Gilbert, then Principal of Brasenose, and won Bessie's heart the first day by telling at the dinner table how he had almost leapt off the coach in Bagley Wood to gather the blue veronica. But she had a better reason for remembering that visit. One day she was in the drawing-room alone, and Wordsworth entered. For a moment he stood silent before the blind child, the little sensitive face, with its wondering, enquiring look, turned towards him. Then he gravely said: "Madam, I hope

I do not disturb you." She never forgot that "Madam"—grave, solemn, almost reverential.

As for the great practical work of her life, the amelioration of the condition of the blind, Miss Martin gives a wonderful account of her noble efforts and her noble success; and the volume contains a great many interesting letters from eminent people, of which the following characteristic note from Mr. Ruskin is not the least interesting:

DENMARK HILL, 2nd September, 1871.

MADAM: I am obliged by your letter, and I deeply sympathise with the objects of the institution over which you preside. But one of my main principles of work is that every one must do their best, and spend all in their own work, and mine is with a much lower race of sufferers than you plead for—with those who 'have eyes and see not.' I am, Madam, your faithful servant,

J. RUSKIN.

Miss Martin is a most sympathetic biographer, and her book should be read by all who care to know the history of one of the most remarkable women of our century.

"Ourselves and Our Neighbors" (Ward & Downey) is a pleasant volume of social essays from the pen of one of the most graceful and attractive of all American poetesses, Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton. Mrs. Moulton, who has a very light literary touch, discusses every important modern problem—from Society rosebuds and old bachelors, down to the latest fashions in bonnets and in sonnets. The best chapter in the book is that entitled "The Gospel of Good Gowns," which contains some very excellent remarks on the ethics of dress. Mrs. Moulton sums up her position in the following passage:

"The desire to please is a natural characteristic of unspoiled womanhood. 'If I lived in the woods, I should dress for the trees,' said a woman widely known for taste and for culture. Every woman's dress should be, and if she has any ideality will be, an expression of herself. . . . The true gospel of dress is that of fitness and taste. Pictures are painted, and music is written, and flowers are fostered, that life may be made beautiful. Let women delight our eyes like pictures, be harmonious as music, and fragrant as flowers, that they also may fulfil their mission of grace and of

beauty. By companionship with beautiful thoughts shall their tastes be so formed that their toilets will never be out of harmony with their means or their position. They will be clothed almost as unconsciously as the lilies of the field; but each one will be herself, and there will be no more uniformity in their attire than in their faces."

The modern Dryad who is ready to "dress for the trees" seems to me a charming type; but I hardly think that Mrs. Moulton is right when she says that the woman of the future will be clothed "almost as unconsciously as the lilies of the field." Possibly, however, she merely means to emphasise the distinction between dressing and dressing-up, a distinction which is often forgotten.

"Warring Angels" (J. Fisher Unwin) is a very sad and suggestive story. It contains no impossible heroine and no improbable hero, but is simply a faithful transcript from life, a truthful picture of men and women as they are. Darwin could not have enjoyed it, as it does not end happily. There is, at least, no distribution of cakes and ale in the last chapter. But then, scientific people are not always the best judges of literature. They

seem to think that the sole aim of art should be to amuse, and had they been consulted on the subject would have banished Melpomene from Parnassus. It may be admitted, however, that not a little of our modern art is somewhat harsh and painful. Our Castaly is very salt with tears, and we have bound the brows of the Muses with cypress and with yew. We are often told that we are a shallow age, yet we have certainly the saddest literature of all the ages, for we have made Truth and not Beauty the aim of art, and seem to value imitation more than imagination. This tendency is, of course, more marked in fiction than it is in poetry. Beauty of form is always in itself a source of joy; the mere *technique* of verse has an imaginative and spiritual element; and life must, to a certain degree, be transfigured before it can find its expression in music. But ordinary fiction, rejecting the beauty of form in order to realise the facts of life, seems often to lack the vital element of delight, to miss that pleasure-giving power in virtue of which the arts exist. It would not, however, be fair to regard "Warring Angels" as simply a specimen of literary photography. It has a marked distinction of style, a definite grace and simplicity of manner. There is

nothing crude in it, though it is to a certain degree inexperienced; nothing violent, though it is often strong. The story it has to tell has been frequently told before, but the treatment makes it new; and Lady Flower, for whose white soul the angels of good and evil are at war, is admirably conceived, and admirably drawn.

"A Song of Jubilee, and other Poems" (Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co.) contains some pretty, picturesque verses. Its author is Mrs. De Courcy Laffan, who, under the name of Mrs. Leith Adams, is well known as a novelist and story writer. The "Jubilee Ode" is quite as good as most of the Jubilee Odes have been, and some of the short poems are graceful. This from "The First Butterfly" is pretty:

"O little bird without a song! I love
Thy silent presence, floating in the light—
A living, perfect thing, when scarcely yet
The snow-white blossom crawls along the wall,
And not a daisy shows its star-like head
Amid the grass."

Miss Bella Duffy's "Life of Madame de Staël" forms part of that admirable "Eminent Women

Series," which is so well edited by Mr. John H. Ingram. There is nothing absolutely new in Miss Duffy's book, but this was not to be expected. Unpublished correspondence, that delight of the eager biographer, is not to be had in the case of Madame de Staël, the De Broglie family having either destroyed or successfully concealed all the papers which might have revealed any facts not already in the possession of the world. Upon the other hand, the book has the excellent quality of condensation, and gives us in less than two hundred pages a very good picture of Madame de Staël and her day. Miss Duffy's criticism of "Corinne" is worth quoting:

"'Corinne' is a classic of which everybody is bound to speak with respect. The enormous admiration which it exacted at the time of its appearance may seem somewhat strange in this year of grace; but then it must be remembered that Italy was not the over-written country it has since become. Besides this, Madame de Staël was the most conspicuous personage of her day. Except Chateaubriand, she had nobody to dispute with her the palm of literary glory in France. Her exile, her literary circle, her courageous opinions,

had kept the eyes of Europe fixed on her for years, so that any work from her pen was sure to excite the liveliest curiosity.

"'Corinne' is a sort of glorified guide-book, with some of the qualities of a good novel. It is very long-winded, but the appetite of the age was robust in that respect, and the highly strung emotions of the hero and heroine could not shock a taste which had been formed by the *Sorrows of Werther*. It is extremely moral, deeply sentimental, and of a deadly earnestness—three characteristics which could not fail to recommend it to a dreary and ponderous generation, the most deficient in taste that ever trod the earth.

"But it is artistic in the sense that the interest is concentrated from first to last on the central figure, and the drama, such as it is, unfolds itself naturally from its starting point, which is the contrast between the characters of Oswald and Corinne."

The "dreary and ponderous generation, the most deficient in taste that ever trod the earth," seems to me a somewhat exaggerated mode of expression, but "glorified guide-book" is a not unfelicitous description of the novel that once thrilled

Europe. Miss Duffy sums up her opinion of Madame de Staël as a writer in the following passage:

"Her mind was strong of grasp and wide in range, but continuous effort fatigued it. She could strike out isolated sentences alternately brilliant, exhaustive, and profound, but she could not link them to other sentences so as to form an organic whole. She always saw things separately, and tried to combine them arbitrarily, and it is generally difficult to follow out any idea of hers from its origin to its end. Her thoughts are like pearls of price profusely scattered, or carelessly strung together, but not set in any design. On closing one of her books the reader is left with no continuous impression. He has been dazzled and delighted, enlightened also by flashes; but the horizons disclosed have vanished again, and the outlook is enriched by no new vistas.

"Then she was deficient in the higher qualities of the imagination. She could analyse, but not characterise; construct, but not create. She could take one defect like selfishness, or one passion like love, and display its workings; or she could describe a whole character, like Napoleon's, with marvellous penetration; but she could not make

her personages talk, or act like human beings. She lacked pathos, and had no sense of humour. In short, hers was a mind endowed with enormous powers of comprehension, and an amazing richness of ideas, but deficient in perception of beauty, in poetry, and in true originality. She was a great social personage, but her influence on literature was not destined to be lasting, because, in spite of foreseeing too much, she had not the true prophetic sense of proportion, and confused the things of the present with those of the future—the accidental with the enduring."

I cannot but think that in this passage Miss Duffy rather underrates Madame de Staël's influence on the literature of the nineteenth century. It is true that she gave our literature no new form, but she was one of those who gave it a new spirit, and the romantic movement owes her no small debt. However, a biography should be read for its pictures more than for its criticisms, and Miss Duffy shows a remarkable narrative power, and tells with a good deal of *esprit* the wonderful adventures of the brilliant woman whom Heine termed "a whirlwind in petticoats."

Mr. Harcourt's reprint of John Evelyn's "Life of Mrs. Godolphin" (Sampson, Low & Co.) is a welcome addition to the list of charming library books. Mr. Harcourt's grandfather, the Archbishop of York, himself John Evelyn's great-great-grandson, inherited the manuscript from his distinguished ancestor, and in 1847 entrusted it for publication to Samuel Wilberforce, then Bishop of Oxford. As the book has been for a long time out of print, this new edition is sure to awake fresh interest in the life of the noble and virtuous lady whom John Evelyn so much admired. Margaret Godolphin was one of the Queen's Maids of Honour at the Court of Charles II, and was distinguished for the delicate purity of her nature, as well as for her high intellectual attainments. Some of the extracts Evelyn gives from her Diary seem to show an austere, formal, almost ascetic spirit; but it was inevitable that a nature so refined as hers should have turned in horror from such ideals of life as were presented by men like Buckingham and Rochester, like Etheridge, Killigrew, and Sedley, like the King himself, to whom she could scarcely bring herself to speak. After her marriage she seems to have become happier and brighter, and her early death makes her a

pathetic and interesting figure in the history of the time. Evelyn can see no fault in her, and his life of her is the most wonderful of all panegyrics.

Amongst the Maids-of-Honour mentioned by John Evelyn is Frances Jennings, the elder sister of the great Duchess of Marlborough. Miss Jennings, who was one of the most beautiful women of her day, married first Sir George Hamilton, brother of the author of the "Mémoires de Grammont," and afterwards Richard Talbot, who was made Duke of Tyrconnel by James II. William's successful occupation of Ireland, where her husband was Lord Deputy, reduced her to poverty and obscurity, and she was probably the first Peeress who ever took to millinery as a livelihood. She had a dressmaker's shop in the Strand, and, not wishing to be detected, sat in a white mask and a white dress, and was known by the name of the "White Widow."

I was reminded of the Duchess when I read Miss Emily Faithfull's admirable article in *Galignani* on "Ladies as Shopkeepers." "The most daring innovation in England at this moment," says Miss Faithfull, "is the lady shopkeeper. At pres-

ent but few people have had the courage to brave the current of social prejudice. We draw such fine distinctions between the wholesale and retail traders that our cotton spinners, calico makers, and general merchants seem to think that they belong to a totally different sphere, from which they look down on the lady who has had sufficient brains, capital, and courage to open a shop. But the old world moves faster than it did in former days, and before the end of the nineteenth century it is probable that a gentlewoman will be recognised in spite of her having entered on commercial pursuits, especially as we are growing accustomed to see scions of our noblest families on our Stock Exchange and in tea merchants' houses; one Peer of the realm is now doing an extensive business in coals, and another is a cab proprietor." Miss Faithfull then proceeds to give a most interesting account of the London dairy opened by the Hon. Mrs. Maberley, of Madame Isabel's millinery establishment, and of the wonderful work done by Miss Charlotte Robinson, who has recently been appointed Decorator to the Queen. "About three years ago," Miss Faithfull tells us, Miss Robinson came to Manchester, and opened a shop in King Street, and, regardless of that bugbear which ter-

rifies most women—the loss of social status—she put up her own name over the door, and without the least self-assertion quietly entered into competition with the sterner sex. The result has been eminently satisfactory. This year Miss Robinson has exhibited at Saltaire and at Manchester, and next year she proposes to exhibit at Glasgow, and, possibly, at Brussels. At first she had some difficulty in making people understand that her work is really commercial, not charitable; she feels that, until a healthy public opinion is created, women will pose as "destitute ladies," and never take a dignified position in any calling they adopt. Gentlemen who earn their own living are not spoken of as "destitute," and we must banish this idea in connection with ladies who are engaged in an equally honourable manner. Miss Faithfull concludes her most valuable article as follows: "The more highly educated our women of business are, the better for themselves, their work, and the whole community. 'Many of the professions to which ladies have hitherto turned are overcrowded, and when once the fear of losing social position is boldly disregarded, it will be found that commercial life offers a variety of more or less lucrative employments to ladies of birth and capital,

who find it more congenial to their tastes and requirements to invest their money and spend their energies in a business which yields a fair return rather than art at home content with a scanty pittance."

I myself entirely agree with Miss Faithfull, though I feel that there is something to be said in favour of the view put forward by Lady Shrewsbury in the present number of "The Woman's World," and a great deal to be said in favour of Mrs. Joyce's scheme for emigration. Mr. Walter Besant, if we are to judge from his last novel, is of Lady Shrewsbury's way of thinking.

I hope that some of my readers will be interested in Miss Beatrice Crane's little poem, "Blush-roses," for which her father, Mr. Walter Crane, has done so lovely and graceful a design. Mrs. Simon, of Birkdale Park, Southport, tells me that she offered a prize last term at her school for the best sonnet on any work of art. The poems were sent to Professor Dowden, who awarded the prize to the youthful authoress of the following sonnet on Mr. Watts's picture of "Hope":

"'HOPE.'

"She sits with drooping form and fair bent head,
Low-bent to hear the faintly sounding strain
That thrills her with the sweet uncertain pain
Of timid trust and restful tears unshed.
Around she feels vast spaces. Awe and dread
Encompass her. And the dark doubt she fain
Would banish, sees the shuddering fear remain
And ever presses near with stealthy tread.
But not for ever will the misty space
Close down upon her meekly patient eyes.
The steady lights within them soon will ope
Their heavy lids, and then the sweet fair face,
Uplifted in a sudden glad surprise,
Will find the bright reward which comes to Hope."

I, myself, am rather inclined to prefer this sonnet on Mr. Watts's "Psyche." The sixth line is deficient; but, in spite of the faulty *technique,* there is a great deal that is suggestive in it:

"'PSYCHE.'

"Unfathomable boundless mystery,
Last work of the Creator, deathless, vast,
Soul—essence moulded of a changeful past;
Thou art the offspring of Eternity;

Breath of his breath, by his vitality
Engendered, in his image cast,
Part of the Nature-song whereof the last
Chord soundeth never in the harmony.
'Psyche'! Thy form is shadowed o'er with pain
Born of intensest longing, and the rain
Of a world's weeping lieth like a sea
Of silent soundless sorrow in thine eyes.
Yet grief is not eternal, for clouds rise
From out the ocean everlastingly."

I have to thank Mr. William Russell for kindly allowing me to reproduce Dante Gabriel Rossetti's drawing of the authoress of "Goblin Market"; and thanks are also due to Mr. Lafayette, of Dublin, for the use of his photograph of H. R. H. the Princess of Wales in her Academic Robes as Doctor of Music, which served as our frontispiece last month; and to Messrs. Hills and Saunders, of Oxford, and Mr. Lord and Mr. Blanchard, of Cambridge, for a similar courtesy in the case of the article on "Greek Plays at the Universities."

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The Princess Emily Ruete of Oman and Zanzibar, whose efforts to introduce women doctors into the East are so well known, has just published a

most interesting account of her life, under the title of "Memoirs of an Arabian Princess" (Ward & Downey). The Princess is the daughter of the celebrated Sejid Said, Iman of Mesket and Sultan of Zanzibar, and her long residence in Germany has given her the opportunity of comparing Eastern with Western civilisation. She writes in a very simple and unaffected manner, and though she has many grievances against her brother, the present Sultan (who seems never to have forgiven her for her conversion to Christianity, and her marriage with a German subject), she has too much tact, *esprit,* and good humour to trouble her readers with any dreary record of family quarrels and domestic differences. Her book throws a great deal of light on the question of the position of women in the East, and shows that much of what has been written on this subject is quite inaccurate. One of the most curious passages is that in which the Princess gives an account of her mother:

"My mother was a Circassian by birth, who in early youth had been torn away from her home. Her father had been a farmer, and she had always lived peacefully with her parents and her little brother and sister. War broke out suddenly, and

the country was overrun by marauding bands. On their approach, the family fled into an underground place, as my mother called it—she probably meant a cellar, which is not known in Zanzibar. Their place of refuge was, however, invaded by a merciless horde, the parents were slain, and the children carried off by three mounted Arnauts.

"She came into my father's possession when quite a child, probably at the tender age of seven or eight years, as she cast her first tooth in our house. She was at once adopted as playmate by two of my sisters, her own age, with whom she was educated and brought up. Together with them she learnt to read, which raised her a good deal above her equals, who, as a rule, became members of our family at the age of sixteen or eighteen years, or older still, when they had outgrown whatever taste they might once have had for schooling. She could scarcely be called pretty; but she was tall and shapely, had black eyes, and hair down to her knees. Of a very gentle disposition, her greatest pleasure consisted in assisting other people, in looking after and nursing any sick person in the house; and I well remember her going about with her books from one patient to another, reading prayers to them.

"She was in great favour with my father, who never refused her anything, though she interceded mostly for others; and when she came to see him he always rose to meet her half way—a distinction he conferred but very rarely. She was as kind and pious as she was modest, and in all her dealings frank and open. She had another daughter besides myself, who had died quite young. Her mental powers were not great, but she was very clever at needlework. She had always been a tender and loving mother to me, but this did not hinder her from punishing me severely when she deemed it necessary.

"She had many friends at Bet-il-Mtoni, which is rarely to be met with in an Arab harem. She had the most unshaken and firmest trust in God. When I was about five years old I remember a fire breaking out in the stables close by, one night while my father was at his city residence. A false alarm spread over the house that we, too, were in imminent danger, upon which the good woman hastened to take me on her arm, and her big kuran (we pronounce the word thus) on the other, and hurried into the open air. On the rest of her possessions she set no value in this hour of danger."

Here is a description of Schesade, the Sultan's second legitimate wife:

"She was a Persian Princess of entrancing beauty, and of inordinate extravagance. Her little retinue was composed of one hundred and fifty cavaliers, all Persians, who lived on the ground floor; with them she hunted and rode in the broad day—rather contrary to Arab notions. The Persian women are subjected to quite a Spartan training in bodily exercise; they enjoy great liberty, much more so than Arab women, but they are also more rude in mind and action.

"Schesade is said to have carried her extravagant style of life beyond bounds; her dresses, cut always after the Persian fashion, were literally covered with embroideries of pearls. A great many of these were picked up nearly every morning by the servants in her rooms, where she had dropped them from her garments, but the Princess would never take any of these precious jewels back again. She did not only drain my father's exchequer most wantonly, but violated many of our sacred laws; in fact, she had only married him for his high station and wealth, and had loved some one else all the time. Such a state of things could, of

course, only end in a divorce; fortunately, Schesade had no children of her own. There is a rumour still current among us that beautiful Schesade was observed, some years after this event, when my father carried on war in Persia, and had the good fortune of taking the fortress of Bender Abbâs on the Persian Gulf, heading her troops, and taking aim at the members of our family herself."

Another of the remarkable women mentioned by the Princess was her step-mother, Azze-bint-Zef, who seems to have completely ruled the Sultan, and to have settled all questions of home and foreign policy; while her great-aunt, the Princess Asche, was regent of the empire during the Sultan's minority, and was the heroine of the siege of Mesket. Of her the Princess gives the following account:

"Dressed in man's clothes, she inspected the outposts herself at night, she watched and encouraged the soldiers in all exposed places, and was saved several times only by the speed of her horse in unforeseen attacks. One night she rode out, oppressed with care, having just received infor-

mation that the enemy was about to attempt an entrance into the city by means of bribery that night, and with intent to massacre all; and now she went to convince herself of the loyalty of her troops. Very cautiously she rode up to a guard, requesting to speak to the 'Akid' (the officer in charge), and did all in her power to seduce him from his duty by great offers of reward on the part of the besiegers. The indignation of the brave man, however, completely allayed her fears as to the fidelity of the troops, but the experiment nearly cost her her own life. The soldiers were about to massacre the supposed spy on the spot, and it required all her presence of mind to make good her escape.

"The situation grew, however, to be very critical at Mesket. Famine at last broke out, and the people were well-nigh distracted, as no assistance or relief could be expected from without. It was, therefore, decided to attempt a last sortie, in order to die at least with glory. There was just sufficient powder left for one more attack, but there was no more lead for either guns or muskets. In this emergency the regent ordered iron nails and pebbles to be used in place of balls. The guns were loaded with all the old iron and brass that

could be collected, and she opened her treasury to have bullets made of her own silver dollars. Every nerve was strained, and the sally succeeded beyond all hope. The enemy was completely taken by surprise, and fled in all directions, leaving more than half their men dead and wounded on the field. Mesket was saved, and, delivered out of her deep distress, the brave woman knelt down on the battle-field and thanked God in fervent prayer.

"From that time her Government was a peaceful one, and she ruled so wisely that she was able to transfer to her nephew, my father, an empire so unimpaired as to place him in a position to extend the empire by the conquest of Zanzibar. It is to my great-aunt, therefore, that we owe, and not to an inconsiderable degree, the acquisition of this second empire.

"She, too, was an Eastern woman!"

All through her book the Princess protests against the idea that Oriental women are degraded or oppressed, and in the following passage she points out how difficult it is for foreigners to get any real information on the subject:

"The education of the children is left entirely to the mother, whether she be legitimate wife or

purchased slave, and it constitutes her chief happiness. Some fashionable mothers in Europe shift this duty on to the nurse, and, by and by, on the governess, and are quite satisfied with looking up their children, or receiving their visits, once a day. In France the child is sent to be nursed in the country, and left to the care of strangers. An Arab mother, on the other hand, looks continually after her children. She watches and nurses them with the greatest affection, and never leaves them as long as they may stand in need of her motherly care, for which she is rewarded by the fondest filial love.

"If foreigners had more frequent opportunities to observe the cheerfulness, the exuberance of spirits even, of Eastern women, they would soon and more easily be convinced of the untruth of all those stories afloat about the degraded, oppressed, and listless state of their life. It is impossible to gain a true insight into the actual domesticity in a few moments' visit; and the conversation carried on on those formal occasions hardly deserves that name; there is barely more than the exchange of a few commonplace remarks —and it is questionable if even these have been correctly interpreted.

"Notwithstanding his innate hospitality, the Arab has the greatest possible objection to having his home pried into by those of another land and creed. Whenever, therefore, a European lady called on us, the enormous circumference of her hoops (which were the fashion then, and took up the entire width of the stairs) was the first thing to strike us dumb with wonder; after which, the very meagre conversation generally confined itself on both sides to the mysteries of different costumes; and the lady retired as wise as she was when she came, after having been sprinkled over with attar of roses, and being the richer for some parting presents. It is true she had entered a harem; she had seen the much pitied Oriental ladies (though only through their veils); she had with her own eyes seen our dresses, our jewellery, the nimbleness with which we sat down on the floor—and that was all. She could not boast of having seen more than any other foreign lady who had called before her. She is conducted upstairs and downstairs, and is watched all the time. Rarely she sees more than the reception-room, and more rarely still can she guess or find out who the veiled lady is with whom she conversed. In short, she has had no opportunity whatsoever of learn-

ing anything of domestic life, or the position of Eastern women."

No one who is interested in the social position of women in the East should fail to read these pleasantly written memoirs. The Princess is herself a woman of high culture, and the story of her life is as instructive as history and as fascinating as fiction.

Mrs. Oliphant's "Makers of Venice" (Macmillan & Co.) is an admirable literary *pendant* to the same writer's charming book on Florence, though there is a wide difference between the beautiful Tuscan city and the sea-city of the Adriatic. Florence, as Mrs. Oliphant points out, is a city full of memories of the great figures of the past. The traveller cannot pass along her streets without treading in the very traces of Dante, without stepping on soil made memorable by footprints never to be effaced. The greatness of the surroundings, the palaces, churches, and frowning mediæval castles in the midst of the city, are all thrown into the background by the greatness, the individuality, the living power and vigour of the men who are their originators, and, at the same time, their inspiring soul. But when we turn

to Venice, the effect is very different. We do not think of the makers of that marvellous city, but rather of what they made. The idealised image of Venice herself meets us everywhere. The mother is not overshadowed by the too great glory of any of her sons. In her records the city is everything—the republic, the worshipped ideal of a community in which every man for the common glory seems to have been willing to sink his own. We know that Dante stood within the red walls of the arsenal, and saw the galleys making and mending, and the pitch flaming up to heaven; Petrarch came to visit the great Mistress of the Sea, taking refuge there, "in this city, true home of the human race," from trouble, war, and pestilence outside; and Byron, with his facile enthusiasms and fervent eloquence, made his home for a time in one of the stately, decaying palaces; but with these exceptions, no great poet has ever associated himself with the life of Venice. She had architects, sculptors, and painters, but no singer of her own. The arts through which she gave her message to the world were visible and imitative. Mrs. Oliphant, in her bright, picturesque style, tells the story of Venice pleasantly and well. Her account of the two Bellinis is especially charming;

and the chapters on Titian and Tintoret are admirably written. She concludes her interesting and useful history with the following words, which are well worthy of quotation, though I must confess that the "alien modernisms" trouble me not a little:

"The critics of recent days have had much to say as to the deterioration of Venice in her new activity, and the introduction of alien modernisms, in the shape of steamboats and other new industrial agents, into her canals and lagoons. But in this adoption of every new element of power, Venice is only proving herself the most faithful representative of the vigorous republic of old. Whatever prejudice or angry love may say, we cannot doubt that the Michiels, the Dandolos, the Foscari, the great rulers who formed Venice, had steamboats existed in their day, serving their purpose better than their barges and *peati,* would have adopted them without hesitation, without a thought of what any critics might say. The wonderful new impulse which has made Italy a great power has justly put strength and life before those old traditions of beauty, which made her not only the 'woman country' of Europe, but a sort of

odalisque trading upon her charms, rather than the nursing mother of a noble and independent nation. That in her recoil from that somewhat degrading position she may here and there have proved too regardless of the claims of antiquity, we need not attempt to deny; the new spring of life in her is too genuine and great to keep her entirely free from this evident danger. But it is strange that anyone who loves Italy, and sincerely rejoices in her amazing resurrection, should fail to recognise how venial is this fault."

Miss Mabel Robinson's last novel, "The Plan of Campaign" (Vizetelly & Co.), is a very powerful study of modern political life. As a concession to humanity, each of the politicians is made to fall in love, and the charm of their various romances fully atones for the soundness of the author's theory of rent. Miss Robinson dissects, describes, and discourses with keen scientific insight and minute observation. Her style, though somewhat lacking in grace, is, at its best, simple and strong. Richard Talbot and Elinor Fetherston are admirably conceived and admirably drawn, and the whole account of the murder of Lord Roeglass is most dramatic.

"A Year in Eden" (T. Fisher Unwin), by Harriet Waters Preston, is a chronicle of New England life, and is full of the elaborate subtlety of the American school of fiction. The Eden in question is the little village of Pierpont, and the Eve of this provincial paradise is a beautiful girl called Monza Middleton, a fascinating, fearless creature, who brings ruin and misery on all who love her. Miss Preston writes an admirable prose style, and the minor characters in the book are wonderfully life-like and true.

"The Englishwoman's Year-Book" (Hatchards) contains a really extraordinary amount of useful information on every subject connected with woman's work. In the census taken in 1831 (six years before the Queen ascended the Throne), no occupation whatever was specified as appertaining to women, except that of domestic service; but in the census of 1881 the number of occupations mentioned as followed by women is upwards of three hundred and thirty. The most popular occupations seem to be those of domestic service, school teaching, and dressmaking; the lowest numbers on the lists are those of bankers, gardeners, and persons engaged in scientific pursuits. Besides these,

the "Year-Book" makes mention of stock-broking and conveyancing as professions that women are beginning to adopt. The historical account of the literary work done by Englishwomen in this century, as given in the "Year-Book," is curiously inadequate, and the list of women's magazines is not complete, but in all other respects the publication seems a most useful and excellent one.

Wordsworth, in one of his interesting letters to Lady Beaumont, says that it is "an awful truth that there neither is nor can be any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of twenty of those persons who live or wish to live in the broad light of the world—among those who either are, or are striving to make themselves, people of consideration in society," adding that the mission of poetry is "to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel, and, therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous." I am, however, rather disposed to think that the age in which we live is one that has a very genuine enjoyment of poetry, though we may no longer agree with Wordsworth's ideas on the subject of the poet's

proper mission; and it is interesting to note that this enjoyment manifests itself by creation even more than by criticism. To realise the popularity of the great poets, one should turn to the minor poets and see whom they follow, what master they select, whose music they echo. At present there seems to be a reaction in favour of Lord Tennyson, if we are to judge by "Rachel, and other Poems" (Cornish Brothers), which is a rather remarkable little volume in its way. The poem that gives its title to the book is full of strong lines and good images; and, in spite of its Tennysonian echoes, there is something attractive in such verses as the following:

"Day by day along the Orient faintly glows the tender dawn;
Day by day the pearly dewdrops tremble on the upland lawn:

"Day by day the star of morning pales before the coming ray,
And the first faint streak of radiance brightens to the perfect day.

"Day by day the rosebud gathers to itself, from earth and sky,

Fragrant stores and ampler beauty, lovelier form
and deeper dye:

"Day by day a richer crimson mantles in its glowing breast—
Every golden hour conferring some sweet grace that crowns the rest.

"And thou canst not tell the moment when the day ascends her throne,
When the morning star hath vanished, and the rose is fully blown.

"So each day fulfils its purpose, calm, unresting, strong, and sure,
Moving onward to completion, doth the work of God endure.

"How unlike man's toil and hurry! how unlike the noise, the strife,
All the pain of incompleteness, all the weariness of life!

"Yet look upward and take courage. He who leads the golden hours,
Feeds the birds, and clothes the lily, made these human hearts of ours;

"Knows their need, and will supply it, manna falling day by day,
Bread from heaven, and food of angels, all along the desert way."

The Secretary of the International Technical College at Bedford has issued a most interesting prospectus of the aims and objects of the Institution. The College seems to be chiefly intended for ladies who have completed their ordinary course of English studies, and it will be divided into two departments, Educational and Industrial. In the latter, classes will be held for various decorative and technical arts, and for wood-carving, etching, and photography, as well as sick-nursing, dressmaking, cookery, physiology, poultry-rearing, and the cultivation of flowers. The curriculum certainly embraces a wonderful amount of subjects, and I have no doubt that the College will supply a real want.

The Ladies' Employment Society has been so successful that it has moved to new premises in Park Street, Grosvenor Square, where there are some very pretty and useful things for sale. The

children's smocks are quite charming, and seem very inexpensive. The subscription to the Society is one guinea a year, and a commission of five per cent. is charged on each thing sold.

Miss May Morris, whose exquisite needlework is well known, has just completed a pair of curtains for a house in Boston. They are amongst the most perfect specimens of modern embroidery that I have seen, and are from Miss Morris's own design. I am glad to hear that Miss Morris has determined to give lessons in embroidery. She has a thorough knowledge of the art, her sense of beauty is as rare as it is refined, and her power of design is quite remarkable.

Mrs. Jopling's life classes for ladies have been such a success that a similar class has been started in Chelsea by Mr. Clegg Wilkinson at the Carlyle Studios, King's Road. Mr. Wilkinson (who is a very brilliant young painter) is strongly of opinion that life should be studied from life itself, and not from that abstract presentation of life which we find in Greek marbles—a position which I have always held very strongly myself.

THE TOMB OF KEATS.

(*Irish Monthly*, July 1877.)

As one enters Rome from the Via Ostiensis by the Porta San Paolo, the first object that meets the eye is a marble pyramid which stands close at hand on the left.

There are many Egyptian obelisks in Rome—tall, snakelike spires of red sandstone, mottled with strange writings, which remind us of the pillars of flame which led the children of Israel through the desert away from the land of the Pharaohs; but more wonderful than these to look upon is this gaunt, wedge-shaped pyramid standing here in this Italian city, unshattered amid the ruins and wrecks of time, looking older than the Eternal City itself, like terrible impassiveness turned to stone. And so in the Middle Ages men supposed this to be the sepulchre of Remus, who was slain by his own brother at the founding of the city, so ancient and mysterious it appears; but we have now, perhaps unfortunately, more accurate information about it, and know that it is the tomb of one Caius

Cestius, a Roman gentleman of small note, who died about 30 B.C.

Yet though we cannot care much for the dead man who lies in lonely state beneath it, and who is only known to the world through his sepulchre, still this pyramid will be ever dear to the eyes of all English-speaking people, because at evening its shadows fall on the tomb of one who walks with Spenser, and Shakespeare, and Byron, and Shelley, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning in the great procession of the sweet singers of England.

For at its foot there is a green sunny slope, known as the Old Protestant Cemetery, and on this a common-looking grave, which bears the following inscription:

"This grave contains all that was mortal of a young English poet, who on his deathbed, in the bitterness of his heart, desired these words to be engraven on his tombstone: HERE LIES ONE WHOSE NAME WAS WRIT IN WATER. February 24, 1821."

And the name of the young English poet is John Keats.

Lord Houghton calls this cemetery "one of the most beautiful spots on which the eye and heart of

man can rest," and Shelley speaks of it as making one "in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place"; and indeed when I saw the violets and the daisies and the poppies that overgrow the tomb, I remembered how the dead poet had once told his friend that he thought the "intensest pleasure he had received in life was in watching the growth of flowers," and how another time, after lying a while quite still, he murmured in some strange prescience of early death, "I feel the flowers growing over me."

But this time-worn stone and these wildflowers are but poor memorials [1] of one so great as Keats; most of all, too, in this city of Rome, which pays such honour to her dead; where popes, and emper-

[1] Reverently some well-meaning persons have placed a marble slab on the wall of the cemetery with a medallion-profile of Keats on it and some mediocre lines of poetry. The face is ugly, and rather hatchet-shaped, with thick sensual lips, and is utterly unlike the poet himself, who was very beautiful to look upon. "His countenance," says a lady who saw him at one of Hazlitt's lectures, "lives in my mind as one of singular beauty and brightness; it had the expression as if he had been looking on some glorious sight." And this is the idea which Severn's picture of him gives. Even Haydon's rough pen-and-ink sketch of him is better than this "marble libel," which I hope will soon be taken down. I think the best representation of the poet would be a coloured bust, like that of the young Rajah of Koolapoor at Florence, which is a lovely and lifelike work of art.

ors and saints, and cardinals lie hidden in "porphyry wombs," or couched in baths of jasper and chalcedony and malachite, ablaze with precious stones and metals, and tended with continual service. For very noble is the site, and worthy of a noble monument; behind looms the grey pyramid, symbol of the world's age, and filled with memories of the sphinx, and the lotus leaf, and the glories of old Nile; in front is the Monte Testaccio, built, it is said, with the broken fragments of the vessels in which all the nations of the East and the West brought their tribute to Rome; and a little distance off, along the slope of the hill under the Aurelian wall, some tall gaunt cypresses rise, like burnt-out funeral torches, to mark the spot where Shelley's heart (that "heart of hearts"!) lies in the earth; and, above all, the soil on which we tread is very Rome!

As I stood beside the mean grave of this divine boy, I thought of him as of a Priest of Beauty slain before his time; and the vision of Guido's St. Sebastian came before my eyes as I saw him at Genoa, a lovely brown boy, with crisp, clustering hair and red lips, bound by his evil enemies to a tree, and though pierced by arrows, raising his eyes with divine, impassioned gaze towards the Eternal

Beauty of the opening heavens. And thus my thoughts shaped themselves to rhyme:

"HEU MISERANDE PUER.

"Rid of the world's injustice and its pain,
He rests at last beneath God's veil of blue;
Taken from life while life and love were new
The youngest of the martyrs here is lain,
Fair as Sebastian and as foully slain.
No cypress shades his grave, nor funeral yew,
But red-lipped daisies, violets drenched with dew
And sleepy poppies, catching the evening rain.

"O proudest heart that broke for misery!
O saddest poet that the world hath seen!
O sweetest singer of the English land!
Thy name was writ in water on the sand,
But our tears shall keep thy memory green,
And make it flourish like a Basil-tree."

Rome, 1877.

Note.—A later version of this sonnet, under the title of "The Grave of Keats," is given in the *Poems,* page 157.

KEATS'S SONNET ON BLUE.

(*Century Guild Hobby Horse,* July 1886.)

During my tour in America I happened one evening to find myself in Louisville, Kentucky.

The subject I had selected to speak on was the Mission of Art in the Nineteenth Century, and in the course of my lecture I had occasion to quote Keats's Sonnet on Blue as an example of the poet's delicate sense of colour-harmonies. When my lecture was concluded there came round to see me a lady of middle age, with a sweet gentle manner and a most musical voice. She introduced herself to me as Mrs. Speed, the daughter of George Keats, and invited me to come and examine the Keats manuscripts in her possession. I spent most of the next day with her, reading the letters of Keats to her father, some of which were at that time unpublished, poring over torn yellow leaves and faded scraps of paper, and wondering at the little Dante in which Keats had written those marvellous notes on Milton. Some months afterwards, when I was in California, I received a letter from Mrs. Speed asking my acceptance of the original manuscript of the sonnet which I had quoted in my lecture. This manuscript I have had reproduced here, as it seems to me to possess much psychological interest. It shows us the conditions that preceded the perfected form,

the gradual growth, not of the conception but of the expression, and the workings of that spirit of selection which is the secret of style. In the case of poetry, as in the case of the other arts, what may appear to be simply technicalities of method are in their essence spiritual not mechanical, and although, in all lovely work, what concerns us is the ultimate form, not the conditions that necessitate that form, yet the preference that precedes perfection, the evolution of the beauty, and the mere making of the music, have, if not their artistic value, at least their value to the artist.

It will be remembered that this sonnet was first published in 1848 by Lord Houghton in his *Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of John Keats.* Lord Houghton does not definitely state where he found it, but it was probably among the Keats manuscripts belonging to Mr. Charles Brown. It is evidently taken from a version later than that in my possession, as it accepts all the corrections, and makes three variations. As in my manuscript the first line is torn away, I give the sonnet here as it appears in Lord Houghton's edition.

"ANSWER TO A SONNET ENDING THUS:

"Dark eyes are dearer far
Than those that make the hyacinthine bell." [1]
By J. H. Reynolds.

"Blue! 'Tis the life of heaven,—the domain
Of Cynthia,—the wide palace of the sun,—
The tent of Hesperus and all his train,—
The bosomer of clouds, gold, grey and dun.
Blue! 'Tis the life of waters—ocean
And all its vassal streams: pools numberless
May rage, and foam, and fret, but never can
Subside if not to dark-blue nativeness.
Blue! gentle cousin of the forest green,
Married to green in all the sweetest flowers,
Forget-me-not,—the blue-bell,—and, that queen
Of secrecy, the violet: what strange powers
Hast thou, as a mere shadow! But how great,
When in an Eye thou art alive with fate!

Feb. 1818."

In the *Athenæum* of the 3rd of June 1876 appeared a letter from Mr. A. J. Horwood, stating that he had in his possession a copy of *The Garden*

[1] "Make" is of course a mere printer's error for "mock," and was subsequently corrected by Lord Houghton. The sonnet as given in *The Garden of Florence* reads "orbs" for "those."

of Florence in which this sonnet was transcribed. Mr. Horwood, who was unaware that the sonnet had been already published by Lord Houghton, gives the transcript at length. His version reads *hue* for *life* in the first line, and *bright* for *wide* in the second, and gives the sixth line thus:

"With all his tributary streams, pools numberless"

a foot too long: it also reads *to* for *of* in the ninth line. Mr. Buxton Forman is of opinion that these variations are decidedly genuine, but indicative of an earlier state of the poem than that adopted in Lord Houghton's edition. However, now that we have before us Keats's first draft of his sonnet, it is difficult to believe that the sixth line in Mr. Horwood's version is really a genuine variation. Keats may have written,

"Ocean,
His tributary streams, pools numberless,"

and the transcript may have been carelessly made, but having got his line right in his first draft, Keats probably did not spoil it in his second. The *Athenæum* version inserts a comma after *art* in

the last line, which seems to me a decided improvement, and eminently characteristic of Keats's method. I am glad to see that Mr. Buxton Forman has adopted it.

As for the corrections that Lord Houghton's version shows Keats to have made in the eighth and ninth lines of this sonnet, it is evident that they sprang from Keats's reluctance to repeat the same word in consecutive lines, except in cases where a word's music or meaning was to be emphasized. The substitution of "its" for "his" in the sixth line is more difficult of explanation. It was due probably to a desire on Keats's part not to mar by any echo the fine personification of Hesperus.

It may be noticed that Keats's own eyes were brown, and not blue, as stated by Mrs. Proctor to Lord Houghton. Mrs. Speed showed me a note to that effect written by Mrs. George Keats on the margin of the page in Lord Houghton's *Life* (p. 100, vol. i.), where Mrs. Proctor's description is given. Cowden Clarke made a similar correction in his *Recollections,* and in some of the later editions of Lord Houghton's book the word "blue" is struck out. In Severn's portraits of Keats also the eyes are given as brown.

The exquisite sense of colour expressed in the ninth and tenth lines may be paralleled by

"The Ocean with its vastness, its blue green,"

of the sonnet to George Keats.

DINNERS AND DISHES.

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 7, 1885.)

A man can live for three days without bread, but no man can live for one day without poetry, was an aphorism of Baudelaire. You can live without pictures and music but you cannot live without eating, says the author of *Dinners and Dishes;* and this latter view is, no doubt, the more popular. Who, indeed, in these degenerate days would hesitate between an ode and an omelette, a sonnet and a salmis? Yet the position is not entirely Philistine; cookery is an art; are not its principles the subject of South Kensington lectures, and does not the Royal Academy give a banquet once a year? Besides, as the coming democracy will, no doubt, insist on feeding us all on penny dinners, it is well that the laws of cookery should be explained: for were the national

meal burned, or badly seasoned, or served up with the wrong sauce a dreadful revolution might follow.

Under these circumstances we strongly recommend *Dinners and Dishes* to every one: it is brief and concise and makes no attempt at eloquence, which is extremely fortunate. For even on ortolans who could endure oratory? It also has the advantage of not being illustrated. The subject of a work of art has, of course, nothing to do with its beauty, but still there is always something depressing about the coloured lithograph of a leg of mutton.

As regards the author's particular views, we entirely agree with him on the important question of macaroni. "Never," he says, "ask me to back a bill for a man who has given me a macaroni pudding." Macaroni is essentially a savoury dish and may be served with cheese or tomatoes but never with sugar and milk. There is also a useful description of how to cook risotto—a delightful dish too rarely seen in England; an excellent chapter on the different kinds of salads, which should be carefully studied by those many hostesses whose imaginations never pass beyond lettuce and beetroot; and actually a recipe for making Brussels

sprouts eatable. The last is, of course, a masterpiece.

The real difficulty that we all have to face in life is not so much the science of cookery as the stupidity of cooks. And in this little handbook to practical Epicureanism the tyrant of the English kitchen is shown in her proper light. Her entire ignorance of herbs, her passion for extracts and essences, her total inability to make a soup which is anything more than a combination of pepper and gravy, her inveterate habit of sending up bread poultices with pheasants,—all these sins and many others are ruthlessly unmasked by the author. Ruthlessly and rightly. For the British cook is a foolish woman who should be turned for her iniquities into a pillar of salt which she never knows how to use.

But our author is not local merely. He has been in many lands; he has eaten back-hendl at Vienna and kulibatsch at St. Petersburg; he has had the courage to face the buffalo veal of Roumania and to dine with a German family at one o'clock; he has serious views on the right method of cooking those famous white truffles of Turin of which Alexandre Dumas was so fond; and, in the face of the Oriental Club, declares that Bombay curry is better than

the curry of Bengal. In fact he seems to have had experience of almost every kind of meal except the "square meal" of the Americans. This he should study at once; there is a great field for the philosophic epicure in the United States. Boston beans may be dismissed at once as delusions, but soft-shell crabs, terrapin, canvas-back ducks, blue fish and the pompono of New Orleans are all wonderful delicacies particularly when one gets them at Delmonico's. Indeed, the two most remarkable bits of scenery in the States are undoubtedly Delmonico's and the Yosemité Valley; and the former place has done more to promote a good feeling between England and America than anything else has in this century.

We hope the "Wanderer" will go there soon and add a chapter to *Dinners and Dishes,* and that his book will have in England the influence it deserves. There are twenty ways of cooking a potato and three hundred and sixty-five ways of cooking an egg, yet the British cook, up to the present moment, knows only three methods of sending up either one or the other.

Dinners and Dishes. By "Wanderer."
(Simpkin and Marshall.)

SHAKESPEARE ON SCENERY.

(*Dramatic Review*, March 14, 1885.)

I have often heard people wonder what Shakespeare would say, could he see Mr. Irving's production of his *Much Ado About Nothing*, or Mr. Wilson Barrett's setting of his *Hamlet*. Would he take pleasure in the glory of the scenery and the marvel of the colour? Would he be interested in the Cathedral of Messina, and the battlements of Elsinore? Or would he be indifferent, and say the play, and the play only, is the thing?

Speculations like these are always pleasurable, and in the present case happen to be profitable also. For it is not difficult to see what Shakespeare's attitude would be; not difficult, that is to say, if one reads Shakespeare himself, instead of reading merely what is written about him.

Speaking, for instance, directly, as the manager of a London theatre, through the lips of the chorus in *Henry V.*, he complains of the smallness of the stage on which he has to produce the pageant of a big historical play, and of the want of scenery which obliges him to cut out many of its most picturesque incidents, apologises for the scanty

number of supers who had to play the soldiers, and for the shabbiness of the properties, and, finally, expresses his regret at being unable to bring on real horses.

In the *Midsummer Night's Dream,* again, he gives us a most amusing picture of the straits to which theatrical managers of his day were reduced by the want of proper scenery. In fact, it is impossible to read him without seeing that he is constantly protesting against the two special limitations of the Elizabethan stage—the lack of suitable scenery, and the fashion of men playing women's parts, just as he protests against other difficulties with which managers of theatres have still to contend, such as actors who do not understand their words; actors who miss their cues; actors who overact their parts; actors who mouth; actors who gag; actors who play to the gallery; and amateur actors.

And, indeed, a great dramatist, as he was, could not but have felt very much hampered at being obliged continually to interrupt the progress of a play in order to send on some one to explain to the audience that the scene was to be changed to a particular place on the entrance of a particular character, and after his exit to somewhere else;

that the stage was to represent the deck of a ship in a storm, or the interior of a Greek temple, or the streets of a certain town, to all of which inartistic devices Shakespeare is reduced, and for which he always amply apologizes. Besides this clumsy method, Shakespeare had two other substitutes for scenery—the hanging out of a placard, and his descriptions. The first of these could hardly have satisfied his passion for picturesqueness and his feeling for beauty, and certainly did not satisfy the dramatic critic of his day. But as regards the description, to those of us who look on Shakespeare not merely as a playwright but as a poet, and who enjoy reading him at home just as much as we enjoy seeing him acted, it may be a matter of congratulation that he had not at his command such skilled machinists as are in use now at the Princess's and at the Lyceum. For had Cleopatra's barge, for instance, been a structure of canvas and Dutch metal, it would probably have been painted over or broken up after the withdrawal of the piece, and, even had it survived to our own day, would, I am afraid, have become extremely shabby by this time. Whereas now the beaten gold of its poop is still bright, and the purple of its sails still beautiful; its silver oars

are not tired of keeping time to the music of the flutes they follow, nor the Nereid's flower-soft hands of touching its silken tackle; the mermaid still lies at its helm, and still on its deck stand the boys with their coloured fans. Yet lovely as all Shakespeare's descriptive passages are, a description is in its essence undramatic. Theatrical audiences are far more impressed by what they look at than by what they listen to; and the modern dramatist, in having the surroundings of his play visibly presented to the audience when the curtain rises, enjoys an advantage for which Shakespeare often expresses his desire. It is true that Shakespeare's descriptions are not what descriptions are in modern plays—accounts of what the audience can observe for themselves; they are the imaginative method by which he creates in the mind of the spectators the image of that which he desires them to see. Still, the quality of the drama is action. It is always dangerous to pause for picturesqueness. And the introduction of self-explanatory scenery enables the modern method to be far more direct, while the loveliness of form and colour which it gives us, seems to me often to create an artistic temperament in the audience, and to produce that joy in

beauty for beauty's sake, without which the great masterpieces of art can never be understood, to which, and to which only, are they ever revealed.

To talk of the passion of a play being hidden by the paint, and of sentiment being killed by scenery, is mere emptiness and folly of words. A noble play, nobly mounted, gives us double artistic pleasure. The eye as well as the ear is gratified, and the whole nature is made exquisitely receptive of the influence of imaginative work. And as regards a bad play, have we not all seen large audiences lured by the loveliness of scenic effect into listening to rhetoric posing as poetry, and to vulgarity doing duty for realism? Whether this be good or evil for the public I will not here discuss, but it is evident that the playwright, at any rate, never suffers.

Indeed, the artist who really has suffered through the modern mounting of plays is not the dramatist at all, but the scene-painter proper. He is rapidly being displaced by the stage-carpenter. Now and then, at Drury Lane, I have seen beautiful old front cloths let down, as perfect as pictures some of them, and pure painter's work, and there are many which we all remember at other theatres, in front of which some dialogue was reduced

to graceful dumb-show through the hammer and tin-tacks behind. But as a rule the stage is overcrowded with enormous properties, which are not merely far more expensive and cumbersome than scene-paintings, but far less beautiful, and far less true. Properties kill perspective. A painted door is more like a real door than a real door is itself, for the proper conditions of light and shade can be given to it; and the excessive use of built-up structures always makes the stage too glaring, for as they have to be lit from behind, as well as from the front, the gas-jets become the absolute light of the scene instead of the means merely by which we perceive the conditions of light and shadow which the painter has desired to show us.

So, instead of bemoaning the position of the playwright, it were better for the critics to exert whatever influence they may possess towards restoring the scene-painter to his proper position as an artist, and not allowing him to be built over by the property man, or hammered to death by the carpenter. I have never seen any reason myself why such artists as Mr. Beverley, Mr. Walter Hann, and Mr. Telbin should not be entitled to become Academicians. They have certainly as

good a claim as have many of those R. A.'s whose total inability to paint we can see every May for a shilling.

And lastly, let those critics who hold up for our admiration the simplicity of the Elizabethan stage remember that they are lauding a condition of things against which Shakespeare himself, in the spirit of a true artist, always strongly protested.

HENRY THE FOURTH AT OXFORD.

(*Dramatic Review*, May 23, 1885.)

I have been told that the ambition of every Dramatic Club is to act *Henry IV.* I am not surprised. The spirit of comedy is as fervent in this play as is the spirit of chivalry; it is an heroic pageant as well as an heroic poem, and like most of Shakespeare's historical dramas it contains an extraordinary number of thoroughly good acting parts, each of which is absolutely individual in character, and each of which contributes to the evolution of the plot.

To Oxford belongs the honour of having been the first to present on the stage this noble play, and the production which I saw last week was in every way worthy of that lovely town, that mother of

sweetness and of light. For, in spite of the roaring of the young lions at the Union, and the screaming of the rabbits in the home of the vivisector, in spite of Keble College, and the tramways, and the sporting prints, Oxford still remains the most beautiful thing in England, and nowhere else are life and art so exquisitely blended, so perfectly made one. Indeed, in most other towns art has often to present herself in the form of a reaction against the sordid ugliness of ignoble lives, but at Oxford she comes to us as an exquisite flower born of the beauty of life and expressive of life's joy. She finds her home by the Isis as once she did by the Ilissus; the Magdalen walks and the Magdalen cloisters are as dear to her as were ever the silver olives of Colonnus and the golden gateway of the house of Pallas: she covers with fanlike tracery the vaulted entrance to Christ Church Hall, and looks out from the windows of Merton; her feet have stirred the Cumnor cowslips, and she gathers fritillaries in the river-fields. To her the clamour of the schools and the dullness of the lecture-room are a weariness and a vexation of spirit; she seeks not to define virtue, and cares little for the categories; she smiles on the swift athlete whose plastic grace has pleased her, and

rejoices in the young Barbarians at their games; she watches the rowers from the reedy bank and gives myrtle to her lovers, and laurels to her poets, and rue to those who talk wisely in the street; she makes the earth lovely to all who dream with Keats; she opens high heaven to all who soar with Shelley; and turning away her head from pedant, proctor and Philistine, she has welcomed to her shrine a band of youthful actors, knowing that they have sought with much ardour for the stern secret of Melpomene, and caught with much gladness the sweet laughter of Thalia. And to me this ardour and this gladness were the two most fascinating qualities of the Oxford performance, as indeed they are qualities which are necessary to any fine dramatic production. For without quick and imaginative observation of life the most beautiful play becomes dull in presentation, and what is not conceived in delight by the actor can give no delight at all to others.

I know that there are many who consider that Shakespeare is more for the study than for the stage. With this view I do not for a moment agree. Shakespeare wrote the plays to be acted, and we have no right to alter the form which he himself selected for the full expression of his work.

Indeed, many of the beauties of that work can be adequately conveyed to us only through the actor's art. As I sat in the Town Hall of Oxford the other night, the majesty of the mighty lines of the play seemed to me to gain new music from the clear young voices that uttered them, and the ideal grandeur of the heroism to be made more real to the spectators by the chivalrous bearing, the noble gesture and the fine passion of its exponents. Even the dresses had their dramatic value. Their archæological accuracy gave us, immediately on the rise of the curtain, a perfect picture of the time. As the knights and nobles moved across the stage in the flowing robes of peace and in the burnished steel of battle, we needed no dreary chorus to tell us in what age or land the play's action was passing, for the fifteenth century in all the dignity and grace of its apparel was living actually before us, and the delicate harmonies of colour struck from the first a dominant note of beauty which added to the intellectual realism of archæology the sensuous charm of art.

I have rarely seen a production better stage-managed. Indeed, I hope that the University will take some official notice of this delightful work of art. Why should not degrees be granted for good

acting? Are they not given to those who misunderstand Plato and who mistranslate Aristotle? And should the artist be passed over? No. To Prince Hal Hotspur and Falstaff, D.C.L.'s should be gracefully offered. I feel sure they would be gracefully accepted. To the rest of the company the crimson or the sheepskin hood might be assigned *honoris causâ* to the eternal confusion of the Philistine, and the rage of the industrious and the dull. Thus would Oxford confer honour on herself, and the artist be placed in his proper position. However, whether or not Convocation recognizes the claims of culture, I hope that the Oxford Dramatic Society will produce every summer for us some noble play like *Henry IV.* For, in plays of this kind, plays which deal with bygone times, there is always this peculiar charm, that they combine in one exquisite presentation the passions that are living with the picturesqueness that is dead. And when we have the modern spirit given to us in an antique form, the very remoteness of that form can be made a method of increased realism. This was Shakespeare's own attitude towards the ancient world, this is the attitude we in this century should adopt towards his plays, and with a feeling akin to this it seemed to me that

these brilliant young Oxonians were working. If it was so, their aim is the right one. For while we look to the dramatist to give romance to realism, we ask of the actor to give realism to romance.

A HANDBOOK TO MARRIAGE.

(*Pall Mall Gazette,* November 18, 1885.)

In spite of its somewhat alarming title this book may be highly recommended to every one. As for the authorities the author quotes, they are almost numberless, and range from Socrates down to Artemus Ward. He tells us of the wicked bachelor who spoke of marriage as "a very harmless amusement" and advised a young friend of his to "marry early and marry often"; of Dr. Johnson who proposed that marriage should be arranged by the Lord Chancellor, without the parties concerned having any choice in the matter; of the Sussex labourer who asked, "Why should I give a woman half my victuals for cooking the other half?" and of Lord Verulam who thought that unmarried men did the best public work. And, indeed, marriage is the one subject on which all women agree and all men disagree. Our author,

however, is clearly of the same opinion as the Scotch lassie who, on her father warning her what a solemn thing it was to get married, answered, "I ken that, father, but it's a great deal solemner to be single." He may be regarded as the champion of the married life. Indeed, he has a most interesting chapter on marriage-made men, and though he dissents, and we think rightly, from the view recently put forward by a lady or two on the Women's Rights platform that Solomon owed all his wisdom to the number of his wives, still he appeals to Bismarck, John Stuart Mill, Mohammed, and Lord Beaconsfield, as instances of men whose success can be traced to the influence of the women they married. Archbishop Whately once defined woman as "a creature that does not reason and pokes the fire from the top," but since his day the higher education of women has considerably altered their position. Women have always had an emotional sympathy with those they love; Girton and Newnham have rendered intellectual sympathy also possible. In our day it is best for a man to be married, and men must give up the tyranny in married life which was once so dear to them, and which, we are afraid, lingers still, here and there.

"Do you wish to be my wife?" said a little boy. "Yes," incautiously answered Mabel. "Then pull off my boots."

On marriage vows our author has, too, very sensible views and very amusing stories. He tells of a nervous bridegroom who, confusing the baptismal and marriage ceremonies, replied when asked if he consented to take the bride for his wife: "I renounce them all"; of a Hampshire rustic who, when giving the ring, said solemnly to the bride: "With my body I thee wash up, and with all my hurdle goods I thee and thou"; of another who when asked whether he would take his partner to be his wedded wife, replied with shameful indecision: "Yes, I'm willin'; but I'd a sight rather have her sister"; and of a Scotch lady who, on the occasion of her daughter's wedding, was asked by an old friend whether she might congratulate her on the event, and answered: "Yes, yes, upon the whole it is very satisfactory; it is true Jeannie hates her gudeman, but then there's always a something!" Indeed, the good stories contained in this book are quite endless and make it very pleasant reading, while the good advice is on all points admirable.

Most young married people nowadays start in

life with a dreadful collection of ormolu inkstands covered with sham onyxes, or with a perfect museum of salt-cellars. We strongly recommend this book as one of the best of wedding presents. It is a complete handbook to an earthly Paradise, and its author may be regarded as the Murray of matrimony and the Baedeker of bliss.

How to be Happy though Married: Being a Handbook to Marriage. By a Graduate in the University of Matrimony. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

TO READ OR NOT TO READ.

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 8, 1886.)

Books, I fancy, may be conveniently divided into three classes:

1. Books to read, such as Cicero's *Letters*, Suetonius, Vasari's *Lives of the Painters*, the *Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*, Sir John Mandeville, Marco Polo, St. Simon's *Memoirs*, Mommsen, and (till we get a better one) Grote's *History of Greece*.

2. Books to re-read, such as Plato and Keats: in the sphere of poetry, the masters not the minstrels; in the sphere of philosophy, the seers not the *savants*.

3. Books not to read at all, such as Thomson's *Seasons,* Rogers's *Italy,* Paley's *Evidences,* all the Fathers except St. Augustine, all John Stuart Mill except the essay on *Liberty,* all Voltaire's plays without any exception, Butler's *Analogy,* Grant's *Aristotle,* Hume's *England,* Lewes's *History of Philosophy,* all argumentative books and all books that try to prove anything.

The third class is by far the most important. To tell people what to read is, as a rule, either useless or harmful; for, the appreciation of literature is a question of temperament not of teaching; to Parnassus there is no primer and nothing that one can learn is ever worth learning. But to tell people what not to read is a very different matter, and I venture to recommend it as a mission to the University Extension Scheme.

Indeed, it is one that is eminently needed in this age of ours, an age that reads so much, that it has no time to admire, and writes so much, that it has no time to think. Whoever will select out of the chaos of our modern curricula "The Worst Hundred Books," and publish a list of them, will confer on the rising generation a real and lasting benefit.

After expressing these views I suppose I should

not offer any suggestions at all with regard to "The Best Hundred Books," but I hope you will allow me the pleasure of being inconsistent, as I am anxious to put in a claim for a book that has been strangely omitted by most of the excellent judges who have contributed to your columns. I mean the *Greek Anthology*. The beautiful poems contained in this collection seem to me to hold the same position with regard to Greek dramatic literature as do the delicate little figurines of Tanagra to the Phidian marbles, and to be quite as necessary for the complete understanding of the Greek spirit.

I am also amazed to find that Edgar Allan Poe has been passed over. Surely this marvellous lord of rhythmic expression deserves a place? If, in order to make room for him, it be necessary to elbow out some one else, I should elbow out Southey, and I think that Baudelaire might be most advantageously substituted for Keble.

No doubt, both in the *Curse of Kehama* and in the *Christian Year* there are poetic qualities of a certain kind, but absolute catholicity of taste is not without its dangers. It is only an auctioneer who should admire all schools of art.

THE LETTERS OF A GREAT WOMAN.

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 6, 1886.)

Of the many collections of letters that have appeared in this century few, if any, can rival for fascination of style and variety of incident the letters of George Sand which have recently been translated into English by M. Ledos de Beaufort. They extend over a space of more than sixty years, from 1812 to 1876, in fact, and comprise the first letters of Aurore Dupin, a child of eight years old, as well as the last letters of George Sand, a woman of seventy-two. The very early letters, those of the child and of the young married woman, possess, of course, merely a psychological interest; but from 1831, the date of Madame Dudevant's separation from her husband and her first entry into Paris life, the interest becomes universal, and the literary and political history of France is mirrored in every page.

For George Sand was an indefatigable correspondent; she longs in one of her letters, it is true, for "a planet where reading and writing are absolutely unknown," but still she had a real pleasure in letter-writing. Her greatest delight was

the communication of ideas, and she is always in the heart of the battle. She discusses pauperism with Louis Napoleon in his prison at Ham, and liberty with Armand Barbes in his dungeon at Vincennes; she writes to Lamennais on philosophy, to Mazzini on socialism, to Lamartine on democracy, and to Ledru-Rollin on justice. Her letters reveal to us not merely the life of a great novelist but the soul of a great woman, of a woman who was one with all the noblest movements of her day and whose sympathy with humanity was boundless absolutely. For the aristocracy of intellect she had always the deepest veneration, but the democracy of suffering touched her more. She preached the regeneration of mankind, not with the noisy ardour of the paid advocate, but with the enthusiasm of the true evangelist. Of all the artists of this century she was the most altruistic; she felt every one's misfortunes except her own. Her faith never left her; to the end of her life, as she tells us, she was able to believe without illusions. But the people disappointed her a little. She saw that they followed persons not principles, and for "the great man theory" George Sand had no respect. "Proper names are the enemies of principles" is one of her aphorisms.

So from 1850 her letters are more distinctly literary. She discusses modern realism with Flaubert, and play-writing with Dumas *fils;* and protests with passionate vehemence against the doctrine of *L'art pour l'art.* "Art for the sake of itself is an idle sentence," she writes; "art for the sake of truth, for the sake of what is beautiful and good, that is the creed I seek." And in a delightful letter to M. Charles Poncy she repeats the same idea very charmingly. "People say that birds sing for the sake of singing, but I doubt it. They sing their loves and happiness, and in that they are in keeping with nature. But man must do something more, and poets only sing in order to move people and to make them think." She wanted M. Poncy to be the poet of the people and, if good advice were all that had been needed, he would certainly have been the Burns of the workshop. She drew out a delightful scheme for a volume to be called *Songs of all Trades* and saw the possibilities of making handicrafts poetic. Perhaps she valued good intentions in art a little too much, and she hardly understood that art for art's sake is not meant to express the final cause of art but is merely a formula of creation; but, as she herself had scaled Parnassus, we must not

quarrel at her bringing Proletarianism with her. For George Sand must be ranked among our poetic geniuses. She regarded the novel as still within the domain of poetry. Her heroes are not dead photographs; they are great possibilities. Modern novels are dissections; hers are dreams. "I make popular types," she writes, "such as I do no longer see, but such as they should and might be." For realism, in M. Zola's acceptation of the word, she had no admiration. Art to her was a mirror that transfigured truths but did not represent realities. Hence she could not understand art without personality. "I am aware," she writes to Flaubert, "that you are opposed to the exposition of personal doctrine in literature. Are you right? Does not your opposition proceed rather from a want of conviction than from a principle of æsthetics? If we have any philosophy in our brain it must needs break forth in our writings. But you, as soon as you handle literature, you seem anxious, I know not why, to be another man, the one who must disappear, who annihilates himself and is no more. What a singular mania! What a deficient taste! The worth of our productions depends entirely on our own. Besides, if we withhold our own opinions

respecting the personages we create, we naturally leave the reader in uncertainty as to the opinion he should himself form of them. That amounts to wishing not to be understood, and the result of this is that the reader gets weary of us and leaves us."

She herself, however, may be said to have suffered from too dominant a personality, and this was the reason of the failure of most of her plays.

Of the drama in the sense of disinterested presentation she had no idea, and what is the strength and life-blood of her novels is the weakness of her dramatic works. But in the main she was right. Art without personality is impossible. And yet the aim of art is not to reveal personality, but to please. This she hardly recognized in her æsthetics, though she realized it in her work. On literary style she has some excellent remarks. She dislikes the extravagances of the romantic school and sees the beauty of simplicity. "Simplicity," she writes, "is the most difficult thing to secure in this world: it is the last limit of experience and the last effort of genius." She hated the slang and *argot* of Paris life, and loved the words used by the peasants in the provinces. "The pro-

vinces," she remarks, "preserve the tradition of the original tongue and create but few new words. I feel much respect for the language of the peasantry; in my estimation it is the more correct."

She thought Flaubert too much preoccupied with the sense of form, and makes these excellent observations to him—perhaps her best piece of literary criticism. "You consider the form as the aim, whereas it is but the effect. Happy expressions are only the outcome of emotion and emotion itself proceeds from a conviction. We are only moved by that which we ardently believe in." Literary schools she distrusted. Individualism was to her the keystone of art as well as of life. "Do not belong to any school: do not imitate any model," is her advice. Yet she never encouraged eccentricity. "Be correct," she writes to Eugène Pelletan, "that is rarer than being eccentric, as the time goes. It is much more common to please by bad taste than to receive the cross of honour."

On the whole, her literary advice is sound and healthy. She never shrieks and she never sneers. She is the incarnation of good sense. And

the whole collection of her letters is a perfect treasure-house of suggestions both on art and on politics.

Letters of George Sand. Translated and edited by Raphael Ledos de Beaufort. (Ward and Downey.)

BÉRANGER IN ENGLAND.

(*Pall Mall Gazette,* April 21, 1886.)

A philosophic politician once remarked that the best possible form of government is an absolute monarchy tempered by street ballads. Without at all agreeing with this aphorism we still cannot but regret that the new democracy does not use poetry as a means for the expression of political opinion. The Socialists, it is true, have been heard singing the later poems of Mr. William Morris, but the street ballad is really dead in England. The fact is that most modern poetry is so artificial in its form, so individual in its essence and so literary in its style, that the people as a body are little moved by it, and when they have grievances against the capitalist or the aristocrat they prefer strikes to sonnets and rioting to rondels.

Possibly, Mr. William Toynbee's pleasant little volume of translations from Béranger may be the herald of a new school. Béranger had all the qualifications for a popular poet. He wrote to be sung more than to be read; he preferred the Pont Neuf to Parnassus; he was patriotic as well as romantic, and humorous as well as humane. Translations of poetry as a rule are merely misrepresentations, but the muse of Béranger is so simple and naïve that she can wear our English dress with ease and grace, and Mr. Toynbee has kept much of the mirth and music of the original. Here and there, undoubtedly, the translation could be improved upon; "rapiers" for instance is an abominable rhyme to "forefathers"; "the hated arms of Albion" in the same poem is a very feeble rendering of "le léopard de l'Anglais," and such a verse as

> "'Mid France's miracles of art,
> Rare trophies won from art's own land,
> I've lived to see with burning heart
> The fog-bred poor triumphant stand,"

reproduces very inadequately the charm of the original:

"Dans nos palais, où, près de la victoire,
Brillaient les arts, doux fruits des beaux climats,
J'ai vu du Nord les peuplades sans gloire,
De leurs manteaux secouer les frimas."

On the whole, however, Mr. Toynbee's work is good; *Les Champs,* for example, is very well translated, and so are the two delightful poems *Rosette* and *Ma République;* and there is a good deal of spirit in *Le Marquis de Carabas*:

"Whom have we here in conqueror's *rôle?*
Our grand old marquis, bless his soul!
Whose grand old charger (mark his bone!)
Has borne him back to claim his own.
Note, if you please, the grand old style
In which he nears his grand old pile;
With what an air of grand old state
He waves that blade immaculate!
Hats off, hats off, for my lord to pass,
The grand old Marquis of Carabas!—"

though "that blade immaculate" has hardly got the sting of "un sabre innocent"; and in the fourth verse of the same poem, "Marquise, you'll have the bed-chamber" does not very clearly convey the

sense of the line "La Marquise a le tabouret." Béranger is not nearly well enough known in England, and though it is always better to read a poet in the original, still translations have their value as echoes have their music.

A Selection from the Songs of De Béranger in English Verse. By William Toynbee. (Kegan Paul.)

THE POETRY OF THE PEOPLE.

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 13, 1886.)

The Countess Martinengo deserves well of all poets, peasants and publishers. Folk-lore is so often treated nowadays merely from the point of view of the comparative mythologist, that it is really delightful to come across a book that deals with the subject simply as literature. For the Folk-tale is the father of all fiction as the Folk-song is the mother of all poetry; and in the games, the tales and the ballads of primitive people it is easy to see the germs of such perfected forms of art as the drama, the novel and the epic. It is, of course, true that the highest expression of life is to be found not in the popular songs, however poetical, of any nation, but in the great masterpieces of self-conscious Art; yet it is pleasant

sometimes to leave the summit of Parnassus to look at the wildflowers in the valley, and to turn from the lyre of Apollo to listen to the reed of Pan. We can still listen to it. To this day, the vineyard dressers of Calabria will mock the passer-by with satirical verses as they used to do in the old pagan days, and the peasants of the olive woods of Provence answer each other in amœbæan strains. The Sicilian shepherd has not yet thrown his pipe aside, and the children of modern Greece sing the swallow-song through the villages in spring-time, though Theognis is more than two thousand years dead. Nor is this popular poetry merely the rhythmic expression of joy and sorrow; it is in the highest degree imaginative; and taking its inspiration directly from nature it abounds in realistic metaphor and in picturesque and fantastic imagery. It must, of course, be admitted that there is a conventionality of nature as there is a conventionality of art, and that certain forms of utterance are apt to become stereotyped by too constant use; yet, on the whole, it is impossible not to recognize in the Folk-songs that the Countess Martinengo has brought together one strong dominant note of fervent and flawless sincerity. Indeed, it is only in the more terrible dramas of

the Elizabethan age that we can find any parallel to the Corsican *voceri* with their shrill intensity of passion, their awful frenzies of grief and hate. And yet, ardent as the feeling is, the form is nearly always beautiful. Now and then, in the poems of the extreme South one meets with a curious crudity of realism, but, as a rule, the sense of beauty prevails.

Some of the Folk-poems in this book have all the lightness and loveliness of lyrics, all of them have that sweet simplicity of pure song by which mirth finds its own melody and mourning its own music, and even where there are conceits of thought and expression they are conceits born of fancy not of affectation. Herrick himself might have envied that wonderful love-song of Provence:

"If thou wilt be the falling dew
And fall on me alway,
Then I will be the white, white rose
On yonder thorny spray.
If thou wilt be the white, white rose
On yonder thorny spray,
Then I will be the honey-bee
And kiss thee all the day.

"If thou wilt be the honey-bee
And kiss me all the day,
Then I will be in yonder heaven
The star of brightest ray.
If thou wilt be in yonder heaven
The star of brightest ray.
Then I will be the dawn, and we
Shall meet at break of day."

How charming also is this lullaby by which the Corsican mother sings her babe to sleep!

"Gold and pearls may vessel lade,
Silk and cloth the cargo be,
All the sails are of brocade
Coming from beyond the sea;
And the helm of finest gold,
Made a wonder to behold,
Fast awhile in slumber lie;
Sleep, my child, and hushaby.

"After you were born full soon,
You were christened all aright;
Godmother she was the moon,
Godfather the sun so bright.

All the stars in heaven told
Wore their necklaces of gold.
Fast awhile in slumber lie;
Sleep, my child, and hushaby."

Or this from Roumania:

"Sleep, my daughter, sleep an hour;
Mother's darling gilliflower.
Mother rocks thee, standing near,
She will wash thee in the clear
Waters from the fountain's run,
To protect thee from the sun.

"Sleep, my darling, sleep an hour;
Grow thou as the gilliflower.
As a tear-drop be thou white,
As a willow tall and slight;
Gentle as the ring-doves are,
And be lovely as a star!"

We hardly know what poems are sung to English babies, but we hope they are as beautiful as these two. Blake might have written them.

The Countess Martinengo has certainly given us a most fascinating book. In a volume of mod-

erate dimensions, not too long to be tiresome nor too brief to be disappointing, she has collected together the best examples of modern Folk-songs, and with her as a guide the lazy reader lounging in his armchair may wander from the melancholy pine-forests of the North to Sicily's orange-groves and the pomegranate gardens of Armenia, and listen to the singing of those to whom poetry is a passion, not a profession, and whose art coming from inspiration and not from schools, if it has the limitations, at least has also the loveliness of its origin, and is one with blowing grasses and the flowers of the field.

Essays in the Study of Folk-Songs. By the Countess Evelyn Martinengo Césaresco. (Redway.)

THE CENCI.

(*Dramatic Review,* May 15, 1886.)

The production of *The Cenci* last week at the Grand Theatre, Islington, may be said to have been an era in the literary history of this century, and the Shelley Society deserves the highest praise and warmest thanks of all for having given us an opportunity of seeing Shelley's play under the conditions he himself desired for it.

For *The Cenci* was written absolutely with a view to theatric presentation, and had Shelley's own wishes been carried out it would have been produced during his lifetime at Covent Garden, with Edmund Kean and Miss O'Neill in the principal parts. In working out his conception, Shelley had studied very carefully the æsthetics of dramatic art. He saw that the essence of the drama is disinterested presentation, and that the characters must not be merely mouthpieces for splendid poetry but must be living subjects for terror and for pity. "I have endeavoured," he says, "as nearly as possible to represent the characters as they probably were, and have sought to avoid the error of making them actuated by my own conception of right or wrong, false or true: thus under a thin veil converting names and actions of the sixteenth century into cold impersonations of my own mind. . . .

"I have avoided with great care the introduction of what is commonly called mere poetry, and I imagine there will scarcely be found a detached simile or a single isolated description, unless Beatrice's description of the chasm appointed for her father's murder should be judged to be of that nature."

He recognized that a dramatist must be allowed far greater freedom of expression than what is conceded to a poet. "In a dramatic composition," to use his own words, "the imagery and the passion should interpenetrate one another, the former being reserved simply for the full development and illustration of the latter. Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion. It is thus that the most remote and the most familiar imagery may alike be fit for dramatic purposes when employed in the illustration of strong feeling, which raises what is low, and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness. In other respects I have written more carelessly, that is, without an over-fastidious and learned choice of words. In this respect I entirely agree with those modern critics who assert that in order to move men to true sympathy we must use the familiar language of men."

He knew that if the dramatist is to teach at all it must be by example, not by precept.

"The highest moral purpose," he remarks, "aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself;

in proportion to the possession of which knowledge every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant and kind. If dogmas can do more it is well: but a drama is no fit place for the enforcement of them." He fully realizes that it is by a conflict between our artistic sympathies and our moral judgment that the greatest dramatic effects are produced. "It is in the restless and anatomizing casuistry with which men seek the justification of Beatrice, yet feel that she has done what needs justification; it is in the superstitious horror with which they contemplate alike her wrongs and their revenge, that the dramatic character of what she did and suffered consists."

In fact no one has more clearly understood than Shelley the mission of the dramatist and the meaning of the drama.

BALZAC IN ENGLISH.

(*Pall Mall Gazette,* September 13, 1886.)

Many years ago, in a number of *All the Year Round,* Charles Dickens complained that Balzac was very little read in England, and although since then the public has become more familiar with the great masterpieces of French fiction, still

it may be doubted whether the *Comédie Humaine* is at all appreciated or understood by the general run of novel readers. It is really the greatest monument that literature has produced in our century, and M. Taine hardly exaggerates when he says that, after Shakespeare, Balzac is our most important magazine of documents on human nature. Balzac's aim, in fact, was to do for humanity what Buffon had done for the animal creation. As the naturalist studied lions and tigers, so the novelist studied men and women. Yet he was no mere reporter. Photography and *procès-verbal* were not the essentials of his method. Observation gave him the facts of life, but his genius converted facts into truths, and truths into truth. He was, in a word, a marvellous combination of the artistic temperament with the scientific spirit. The latter be bequeathed to his disciples; the former was entirely his own. The distinction between such a book as M. Zola's *L'Assommoir* and such a book as Balzac's *Illusions Perdues* is the distinction between unimaginative realism and imaginative reality. "All Balzac's characters," said Baudelaire, "are gifted with the same ardour of life that animated himself. All his fictions are as deeply coloured as dreams. Every

mind is a weapon loaded to the muzzle with will. The very scullions have genius." He was, of course, accused of being immoral. Few writers who deal directly with life escape that charge. His answer to the accusation was characteristic and conclusive. "Whoever contributes his stone to the edifice of ideas," he wrote, "whoever proclaims an abuse, whoever sets his mark upon an evil to be abolished, always passes for immoral. If you are true in your portraits, if, by dint of daily and nightly toil, you succeed in writing the most difficult language in the world, the word immoral is thrown in your face." The morals of the personages of the *Comédie Humaine* are simply the morals of the world around us. They are part of the artist's subject-matter; they are not part of his method. If there be any need of censure it is to life, not to literature, that it should be given. Balzac, besides, is essentially universal. He sees life from every point of view. He has no preferences and no prejudices. He does not try to prove anything. He feels that the spectacle of life contains its own secret. "Il crée un monde et se tait."

And what a world it is! What a panorama of passions! What a pell-mell of men and women!

It was said of Trollope that he increased the number of our acquaintances without adding to our visiting list; but after the *Comédie Humaine* one begins to believe that the only real people are the people who never existed. Lucien de Rubempré, le Père Goriot, Ursule Mirouët, Marguerite Claës, the Baron Hulot, Madame Marneffe, le Cousin Pons, De Marsay—all bring with them a kind of contagious illusion of life. They have a fierce vitality about them: their existence is fervent and fiery-coloured; we not merely feel for them but we see them—they dominate our fancy and defy scepticism. A steady course of Balzac reduces our living friends to shadows, and our acquaintances to the shadows of shades. Who would care to go out to an evening party to meet Tomkins, the friend of one's boyhood, when one can sit at home with Lucien de Rubempré? It is pleasanter to have the entrée to Balzac's society than to receive cards from all the duchesses in Mayfair.

In spite of this, there are many people who have declared the *Comédie Humaine* to be indigestible. Perhaps it is: but then what about truffles? Balzac's publisher refused to be disturbed by any such criticism as that. "Indigestible, is it?" he ex-

claimed with what, for a publisher, was rare good sense. "Well, I should hope so; who ever thinks of a dinner that isn't?"

Balzac's Novels in English. *The Duchesse de Langeais and Other Stories; César Birotteau.* (Routledge and Sons.)

BEN JONSON.

(*Pall Mall Gazette,* September 20, 1886.)

As for Mr. Symonds' estimate of Jonson's genius, it is in many points quite excellent. He ranks him with the giants rather than with the gods, with those who compel our admiration by their untiring energy and huge strength of intellectual muscle, not with those "who share the divine gifts of creative imagination and inevitable instinct." Here he is right. Pelion more than Parnassus was Jonson's home. His art has too much effort about it, too much definite intention. His style lacks the charm of chance. Mr. Symonds is right also in the stress he lays on the extraordinary combination in Jonson's work of the most concentrated realism with encyclopædic erudition. In Jonson's comedies London slang and learned scholarship go hand in hand. Literature was as living a thing to him as life itself. He used his

classical lore not merely to give form to his verse, but to give flesh and blood to the persons of his plays. He could build up a breathing creature out of quotations. He made the poets of Greece and Rome terribly modern, and introduced them to the oddest company. His very culture is an element in his coarseness. There are moments when one is tempted to liken him to a beast that has fed off books.

We cannot, however, agree with Mr. Symonds when he says that Jonson "rarely touched more than the outside of character," that his men and women are "the incarnations of abstract properties rather than living human beings," that they are in fact mere "masqueraders and mechanical puppets." Eloquence is a beautiful thing but rhetoric ruins many a critic, and Mr. Symonds is essentially rhetorical. When, for instance, he tells us that "Jonson made masks," while "Dekker and Heywood created souls," we feel that he is asking us to accept a crude judgment for the sake of a smart antithesis. It is, of course, true that we do not find in Jonson the same growth of character that we find in Shakespeare, and we may admit that most of the characters in Jonson's plays are, so to speak, ready-made. But a ready-

made character is not necessarily either mechanical or wooden, two epithets Mr. Symonds uses constantly in his criticism.

We cannot tell, and Shakespeare himself does not tell us, why Iago is evil, why Regan and Goneril have hard hearts, or why Sir Andrew Aguecheek is a fool. It is sufficient that they are what they are, and that nature gives warrant for their existence. If a character in a play is lifelike, if we recognize it as true to nature, we have no right to insist on the author explaining its genesis to us. We must accept it as it is: and in the hands of a good dramatist mere presentation can take the place of analysis, and indeed is often a more dramatic method, because a more direct one. And Jonson's characters are true to nature. They are in no sense abstractions; they are types. Captain Bobadil and Captain Tucca, Sir John Daw and Sir Amorous La Foole, Volpone and Mosca, Subtle and Sir Epicure Mammon, Mrs. Purecraft and the Rabbi Busy are all creatures of flesh and blood, none the less lifelike because they are labelled. In this point Mr. Symonds seems to us unjust towards Jonson.

We think, also, that a special chapter might have been devoted to Jonson as a literary critic.

The creative activity of the English Renaissance is so great that its achievements in the sphere of criticism are often overlooked by the student. Then, for the first time, was language treated as an art. The laws of expression and composition were investigated and formularized. The importance of words was recognized. Romanticism, Realism and Classicism fought their first battles. The dramatists are full of literary and art criticisms, and amused the public with slashing articles on one another in the form of plays.

"English Worthies." Edited by Andrew Lang. *Ben Jonson.* By John Addington Symonds. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

MR. SYMONDS' HISTORY OF THE RENAISSANCE.

(*Pall Mall Gazette,* November 10, 1886.)

Mr. Symonds has at last finished his history of the Italian Renaissance. The two volumes just published deal with the intellectual and moral conditions in Italy during the seventy years of the sixteenth century which followed the coronation of Charles the Fifth at Bologna, an era to which Mr. Symonds gives the name of the Catholic Reaction, and they contain a most interesting

and valuable account of the position of Spain in the Italian peninsula, the conduct of the Tridentine Council, the specific organization of the Holy Office and the Company of Jesus, and the state of society upon which those forces were brought to bear. In his previous volumes Mr. Symonds had regarded the past rather as a picture to be painted than as a problem to be solved. In these two last volumes, however, he shows a clearer appreciation of the office of history. The art of the picturesque chronicler is completed by something like the science of the true historian, the critical spirit begins to manifest itself, and life is not treated as a mere spectacle, but the laws of its evolution and progress are investigated also. We admit that the desire to represent life at all costs under dramatic conditions still accompanies Mr. Symonds, and that he hardly realizes that what seems romance to us was harsh reality to those who were engaged in it. Like most dramatists, also, he is more interested in the psychological exceptions than in the general rule. He has something of Shakespeare's sovereign contempt of the masses. The people stir him very little, but he is fascinated by great personalities. Yet it is only fair to remember that the age itself was one

of exaggerated individualism, and that literature had not yet become a mouthpiece for the utterances of humanity. Men appreciated the aristocracy of intellect, but with the democracy of suffering they had no sympathy. The cry from the brickfields had still to be heard. Mr. Symonds' style, too, has much improved. Here and there, it is true, we come across traces of the old manner, as in the apocalyptic vision of the seven devils that entered Italy with the Spaniard, and the description of the Inquisition as a Belial-Moloch, a "hideous idol whose face was blackened with soot from burning human flesh." Such a sentence, also, as "over the Dead Sea of social putrefaction floated the sickening oil of Jesuitical hypocrisy," reminds us that rhetoric has not yet lost its charms for Mr. Symonds. Still, on the whole, the style shows far more reserve, balance and sobriety, than can be found in the earlier volumes where violent antithesis forms the predominant characteristic, and accuracy is often sacrificed to an adjective.

Amongst the most interesting chapters of the book are those on the Inquisition, on Sarpi, the great champion of the severance of Church from State, and on Giordano Bruno. Indeed, the story

of Bruno's life, from his visit to London and Oxford, his sojourn in Paris and wanderings through Germany, down to his betrayal at Venice and martyrdom at Rome, is most powerfully told, and the estimate of the value of his philosophy and the relation he holds to modern science, is at once just and appreciative. The account also of Ignatius Loyola and the rise of the Society of Jesus is extremely interesting, though we cannot think that Mr. Symonds is very happy in his comparison of the Jesuits to "fanatics laying stones upon a railway" or "dynamiters blowing up an emperor or a corner of Westminster Hall." Such a judgment is harsh and crude in expression and more suitable to the clamour of the Protestant Union than to the dignity of the true historian. Mr. Symonds, however, is rarely deliberately unfair, and there is no doubt but that his work on the Catholic Reaction is a most valuable contribution to modern history—so valuable, indeed, that in the account he gives of the Inquisition in Venice it would be well worth his while to bring the picturesque fiction of the text into some harmony with the plain facts of the footnote.

On the poetry of the sixteenth century Mr. Symonds has, of course, a great deal to say, and

on such subjects he always writes with ease, grace, and delicacy of perception. We admit that we weary sometimes of the continual application to literature of epithets appropriate to plastic and pictorial art. The conception of the unity of the arts is certainly of great value, but in the present condition of criticism it seems to us that it would be more useful to emphasize the fact that each art has its separate method of expression. The essay on Tasso, however, is delightful reading, and the position the poet holds towards modern music and modern sentiment is analysed with much subtlety. The essay on Marino also is full of interest. We have often wondered whether those who talk so glibly of Euphuism and Marinism in literature have ever read either *Euphues* or the *Adone*. To the latter they can have no better guide than Mr. Symonds, whose description of the poem is most fascinating. Marino, like many greater men, has suffered much from his disciples, but he himself was a master of graceful fancy and of exquisite felicity of phrase; not, of course, a great poet but certainly an artist in poetry and one to whom language is indebted. Even those conceits that Mr. Symonds feels bound to censure have something charming about them.

The continual use of periphrases is undoubtedly a grave fault in style, yet who but a pedant would really quarrel with such periphrases as *sirena de boschi* for the nightingale, or *il novello Edimione* for Galileo?

From the poets Mr. Symonds passes to the painters; not those great artists of Florence and Venice of whom he has already written, but the Eclectics of Bologna, the Naturalists of Naples and Rome. This chapter is too polemical to be pleasant. The one on music is much better, and Mr. Symonds gives us a most interesting description of the gradual steps by which the Italian genius passed from poetry and painting to melody and song, till the whole of Europe thrilled with the marvel and mystery of this new language of the soul. Some small details should perhaps be noticed. It is hardly accurate, for instance, to say that Monteverde's *Orfeo* was the first form of the recitative-Opera, as Peri's *Dafne* and *Euridice* and Cavaliere's *Rappresentazione* preceded it by some years, and it is somewhat exaggerated to say that "under the régime of the commonwealth the national growth of English music received a check from which it never afterwards recovered," as it was with Cromwell's auspices that the first

English Opera was produced, thirteen years before any Opera was regularly established in Paris. The fact that England did not make such development in music as Italy and Germany did, must be ascribed to other causes than "the prevalence of Puritan opinion."

These, however, are minor points. Mr. Symonds is to be warmly congratulated on the completion of his history of the Renaissance in Italy. It is a most wonderful monument of literary labour, and its value to the student of Humanism cannot be doubted. We have often had occasion to differ from Mr. Symonds on questions of detail, and we have more than once felt it our duty to protest against the rhetoric and over-emphasis of his style, but we fully recognize the importance of his work and the impetus he has given to the study of one of the vital periods of the world's history. Mr. Symonds' learning has not made him a pedant; his culture has widened not narrowed his sympathies, and though he can hardly be called a great historian, yet he will always occupy a place in English literature as one of the remarkable men of letters in the nineteenth century.

Renaissance in Italy: The Catholic Reaction. In two Parts. By John Addington Symonds. (Smith, Elder and Co.)

MR. MORRIS'S *ODYSSEY*.

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 26, 1887.)

Of all our modern poets, Mr. William Morris is the one best qualified by nature and by art to translate for us the marvellous epic of the wanderings of Odysseus. For he is our only true story-singer since Chaucer; if he is a Socialist, he is also a Saga-man; and there was a time when he was never wearied of telling us strange legends of gods and men, wonderful tales of chivalry and romance. Master as he is of decorative and descriptive verse, he has all the Greek's joy in the visible aspect of things, all the Greek's sense of delicate and delightful detail, all the Greek's pleasure in beautiful textures and exquisite materials and imaginative designs; nor can any one have a keener sympathy with the Homeric admiration for the workers and the craftsmen in the various arts, from the stainers in white ivory and the embroiderers in purple and gold, to the weaver sitting by the loom and the dyer dipping in the vat, the chaser of shield and helmet, the carver of wood or stone. And to all this is added the true temper of high romance, the power to make the

past as real to us as the present, the subtle instinct to discern passion, the swift impulse to portray life.

It is no wonder the lovers of Greek literature have so eagerly looked forward to Mr. Morris's version of the Odyssean epic, and now that the first volume has appeared, it is not extravagant to say that of all our English translations this is the most perfect and the most satisfying. In spite of Coleridge's well-known views on the subject, we have always held that Chapman's *Odyssey* is immeasurably inferior to his *Iliad,* the mere difference of metre alone being sufficient to set the former in a secondary place; Pope's *Odyssey,* with its glittering rhetoric and smart antithesis, has nothing of the grand manner of the original; Cowper is dull, and Bryant dreadful, and Worsley too full of Spenserian prettinesses; while excellent though Messrs. Butcher and Lang's version undoubtedly is in many respects, still, on the whole, it gives us merely the facts of the *Odyssey* without providing anything of its artistic effect. Avia's translation even, though better than almost all its predecessors in the same field, is not worthy of taking rank beside Mr. Morris's, for here we have a true work of art, a rendering not merely

of language into language, but of poetry into poetry, and though the new spirit added in the transfusion may seem to many rather Norse than Greek, and, perhaps at times, more boisterous than beautiful, there is yet a vigour of life in every line, a splendid ardour through each canto, that stirs the blood while one reads like the sound of a trumpet, and that, producing a physical as well as a spiritual delight, exults the senses no less than it exalts the soul. It may be admitted at once that, here and there, Mr. Morris has missed something of the marvellous dignity of the Homeric verse, and that, in his desire for rushing and ringing metre, he has occasionally sacrificed majesty to movement, and made stateliness give place to speed; but it is really only in such blank verse as Milton's that this effect of calm and lofty music can be attained, and in all other respects blank verse is the most inadequate medium for reproducing the full flow and fervour of the Greek hexameter. One merit, at any rate, Mr. Morris's version entirely and absolutely possesses. It is, in no sense of the word, literary; it seems to deal immediately with life itself, and to take from the reality of things its own form and colour; it is always direct and simple, and at its best has

something of the "large utterance of the early gods."

As for individual passages of beauty, nothing could be better than the wonderful description of the house of the Phœacian king, or the whole telling of the lovely legend of Circe, or the manner in which the pageant of the pale phantoms in Hades is brought before our eyes. Perhaps the huge epic humour of the escape from the Cyclops is hardly realized, but there is always a linguistic difficulty about rendering this fascinating story into English, and where we are given so much poetry we should not complain about losing a pun; and the exquisite idyll of the meeting and parting with the daughter of Alcinous, is really delightfully told. How good, for instance, is this passage taken at random from the Sixth Book:

"But therewith unto the handmaids goodly Odysseus spake:
'Stand off I bid you, damsels, while the work in hand I take,
And wash the brine from my shoulders, and sleek them all around.
Since verily now this long while sweet oil they have not found.

But before you nought will I wash me, for shame I have indeed,
Amidst of fair-tressed damsels to be all bare of weed.'
So he spake and aloof they gat them, and thereof they told the may,
But Odysseus with the river from his body washed away
The brine from his back and shoulders wrought broad and mightily,
And from his head was he wiping the foam of the untilled sea;
But when he had thoroughly washed him, and the oil about him had shed,
He did upon the raiment the gift of the maid unwed.
But Athene, Zeus-begotten, dealt with him in such wise
That bigger yet was his seeming, and mightier to all eyes,
With the hair on his head crisp curling as the bloom of the daffodil.
And as when the silver with gold is o'erlaid by a man of skill,
Yea, a craftsman whom Hephæstus and Pallas Athene have taught

To be master over masters, and lovely work he hath wrought;
So she round his head and his shoulders shed grace abundantly."

It may be objected by some that the line

"With the hair on his head crisp curling as the bloom of the daffodil,"

is a rather fanciful version of

οὖλας ἦκε κόμας, ὑακινθίνῳ ἄνθει ὁμοίας,

and it certainly seems probable that the allusion is to the dark colour of the hero's hair; still, the point is not one of much importance, though it may be worth noting that a similar expression occurs in Ogilby's superbly illustrated translation of the *Odyssey*, published in 1665, where Charles II.'s Master of the Revels in Ireland gives the passage thus:

"Minerva renders him more tall and fair,
Curling in rings like daffodils his hair."

No anthology, however, can show the true merit of Mr. Morris's translation, whose real merit does

not depend on stray beauties, nor is revealed by chance selections, but lies in the absolute rightness and coherence of the whole, in its purity and justice of touch, its freedom from affectation and commonplace, its harmony of form and matter. It is sufficient to say that this is a poet's version of a poet, and for such surely we should be thankful. In these latter days of coarse and vulgar literature, it is something to have made the great sea-epic of the South native and natural to our northern isle, something to have shown that our English speech may be a pipe through which Greek lips can blow, something to have taught Nausicaa to speak the same language as Perdita.

The Odyssey of Homer. Done into English Verse by William Morris, author of *The Earthly Paradise.* In two volumes. Volume I. (Reeves and Turner.)

For review of Volume II. see *Mr. Morris's Completion of the Odyssey,* page 379.

RUSSIAN NOVELISTS.

(*Pall Mall Gazette,* May 2, 1887.)

Of the three great Russian novelists of our time Tourgenieff is by far the finest artist. He has that spirit of exquisite selection, that delicate choice of detail, which is the essence of style; his

work is entirely free from any personal intention; and by taking existence at its most fiery-coloured moments he can distil into a few pages of perfect prose the moods and passions of many lives.

Count Tolstoi's method is much larger, and his field of vision more extended. He reminds us sometimes of Paul Veronese, and, like that great painter, can crowd, without over-crowding, the giant canvas on which he works. We may not at first gain from his works that artistic unity of impression which is Tourgenieff's chief charm, but once that we have mastered the details the whole seems to have the grandeur and the simplicity of an epic. Dostoieffski differs widely from both his rivals. He is not so fine an artist as Tourgenieff, for he deals more with the facts than with the effects of life; nor has he Tolstoi's largeness of vision and epic dignity; but he has qualities that are distinctively and absolutely his own, such as a fierce intensity of passion and concentration of impulse, a power of dealing with the deepest mysteries of psychology and the most hidden springs of life, and a realism that is pitiless in its fidelity, and terrible because it is true. Some time ago we had occasion to draw attention to his marvellous novel *Crime and Punishment,* where in

the haunt of impurity and vice a harlot and an assassin meet together to read the story of Dives and Lazarus, and the outcast girl leads the sinner to make atonement for his sin; nor is the book entitled *Injury and Insult* at all inferior to that great masterpiece. Mean and ordinary though the surroundings of the story may seem, the heroine Natasha is like one of the noble victims of Greek tragedy; she is Antigone with the passion of Phædra, and it is impossible to approach her without a feeling of awe. Greek also is the gloom of Nemesis that hangs over each character, only it is a Nemesis that does not stand outside of life, but is part of our own nature and of the same material as life itself. Aleosha, the beautiful young lad whom Natasha follows to her doom, is a second Tito Melema, and has all Tito's charm and grace and fascination. Yet he is different. He would never have denied Baldassare in the Square at Florence, nor lied to Romola about Tessa. He has a magnificent, momentary sincerity, a boyish unconsciousness of all that life signifies, an ardent enthusiasm for all that life cannot give. There is nothing calculating about him. He never thinks evil, he only does it. From a psychological point of view he is one of the most

interesting characters of modern fiction, as from an artistic he is one of the most attractive. As we grow to know him he stirs strange questions for us, and makes us feel that it is not the wicked only who do wrong, nor the bad alone who work evil.

And by what a subtle objective method does Dostoieffski show us his characters! He never tickets them with a list nor labels them with a description. We grow to know them very gradually, as we know people whom we meet in society, at first by little tricks of manner, personal appearance, fancies in dress, and the like; and afterwards by their deeds and words; and even then they constantly elude us, for though Dostoieffski may lay bare for us the secrets of their nature, yet he never explains his personages away; they are always surprising us by something that they say or do, and keep to the end the eternal mystery of life.

Irrespective of its value as a work of art, this novel possesses a deep autobiographical interest also, as the character of Vania, the poor student who loves Natasha through all her sin and shame, is Dostoieffski's study of himself. Goethe once had to delay the completion of one of his novels

till experience had furnished him with new situations, but almost before he had arrived at manhood Dostoieffski knew life in its most real forms; poverty and suffering, pain and misery, prison, exile, and love, were soon familiar to him, and by the lips of Vania he has told his own story. This note of personal feeling, this harsh reality of actual experience, undoubtedly gives the book something of its strange fervour and terrible passion, yet it has not made it egotistic; we see things from every point of view, and we feel, not that fiction has been trammelled by fact, but that fact itself has become ideal and imaginative. Pitiless, too, though Dostoieffski is in his method as an artist, as a man he is full of human pity for all, for those who do evil as well as for those who suffer it, for the selfish no less than for those whose lives are wrecked for others and whose sacrifice is in vain. Since *Adam Bede* and *Le Père Goriot* no more powerful novel has been written than *Insult and Injury.*

Injury and Insult. By Fedor Dostoieffski. Translated from the Russian by Frederick Whishaw. (Vizetelly and Co.)

MR. PATER'S *IMAGINARY PORTRAITS.*

(*Pall Mall Gazette,* June 11, 1887.)

To convey ideas through the medium of images has always been the aim of those who are artists as well as thinkers in literature, and it is to a desire to give a sensuous environment to intellectual concepts that we owe Mr. Pater's last volume. For these Imaginary or, as we should prefer to call them, Imaginative Portraits of his, form a series of philosophic studies in which the philosophy is tempered by personality, and the thought shown under varying conditions of mood and manner, the very permanence of each principle gaining something through the change and colour of the life through which it finds expression. The most fascinating of all these pictures is undoubtedly that of Sebastian Van Storck. The account of Watteau is perhaps a little too fanciful, and the description of him as one who was "always a seeker after something in the world, that is there in no satisfying measure, or not at all," seems to us more applicable to him who saw Mona Lisa sitting among the rocks than the gay and debonair *peintre des fêtes galantes.* But

Sebastian, the grave young Dutch philosopher, is charmingly drawn. From the first glimpse we get of him, skating over the water-meadows with his plume of squirrel's tail and his fur muff, in all the modest pleasantness of boyhood, down to his strange death in the desolate house amid the sands of the Helder, we seem to see him, to know him, almost to hear the low music of his voice. He is a dreamer, as the common phrase goes, and yet he is poetical in this sense, that his theorems shape life for him, directly. Early in youth he is stirred by a fine saying of Spinoza, and sets himself to realize the ideal of an intellectual disinterestedness, separating himself more and more from the transient world of sensation, accident and even affection, till what is finite and relative becomes of no interest to him, and he feels that as nature is but a thought of his, so he himself is but a passing thought of God. This conception, of the power of a mere metaphysical abstraction over the mind of one so fortunately endowed for the reception of the sensible world, is exceedingly delightful, and Mr. Pater has never written a more subtle psychological study, the fact that Sebastian dies in an attempt to save the life of a little child giving to

the whole story a touch of poignant pathos and sad irony.

Denys l'Auxerrois is suggested by a figure found, or said to be found, on some old tapestries in Auxerre, the figure of a "flaxen and flowery creature, sometimes well-nigh naked among the vine-leaves, sometimes muffled in skins against the cold, sometimes in the dress of a monk, but always with a strong impress of real character and incident from the veritable streets" of the town itself. From this strange design Mr. Pater has fashioned a curious mediæval myth of the return of Dionysus among men, a myth steeped in colour and passion and old romance, full of wonder and full of worship, Denys himself being half animal and half god, making the world mad with a new ecstasy of living, stirring the artists simply by his visible presence, drawing the marvel of music from reed and pipe, and slain at last in a stage-play by those who had loved him. In its rich affluence of imagery this story is like a picture by Mantegna, and indeed Mantegna might have suggested the description of the pageant in which Denys rides upon a gaily-painted chariot, in soft silken raiment and, for head-dress, a strange elephant scalp with gilded tusks.

If *Denys l'Auxerrois* symbolizes the passion of the senses and *Sebastian Van Storck* the philosophic passion, as they certainly seem to do, though no mere formula or definition can adequately express the freedom and variety of the life that they portray, the passion for the imaginative world of art is the basis of the story of *Duke Carl of Rosenmold.* Duke Carl is not unlike the late King of Bavaria, in his love of France, his admiration for the *Grand Monarque* and his fantastic desire to amaze and to bewilder, but the resemblance is possibly only a chance one. In fact Mr. Pater's young hero is the precursor of the *Aufklärung* of the last century, the German precursor of Herder and Lessing and Goethe himself, and finds the forms of art ready to his hand without any national spirit to fill them or make them vital and responsive. He too dies, trampled to death by the soldiers of the country he so much admired, on the night of his marriage with a peasant girl, the very failure of his life lending him a certain melancholy grace and dramatic interest.

On the whole, then, this is a singularly attractive book. Mr. Pater is an intellectual impressionist. He does not weary us with any definite doctrine or seek to suit life to any formal creed.

He is always looking for exquisite moments and, when he has found them, he analyses them with delicate and delightful art, then passes on, often to the opposite pole of thought or feeling, knowing that every mood has its own quality and charm and is justified by its mere existence. He has taken the sensationalism of Greek philosophy and made it a new method of art criticism. As for his style, it is curiously ascetic. Now and then, we come across phrases with a strange sensuousness of expression, as when he tells us how Denys l'Auxerrois, on his return from a long journey, "ate flesh for the first time, tearing the hot, red morsels with his delicate fingers in a kind of wild greed," but such passages are rare. Asceticism is the keynote of Mr. Pater's prose; at times it is almost too severe in its self-control and makes us long for a little freedom. For indeed, the danger of such prose as his is that it is apt to become somewhat laborious. Here and there, one is tempted to say of Mr. Pater that he is "a seeker after something in language, that is there in no satisfying measure, or not at all." The continual preoccupation with phrase and epithet has its drawbacks as well as its virtues. And yet, when all is said, what wonderful prose it is, with its

subtle preferences, its fastidious purity, its rejection of what is common or ordinary! Mr. Pater has the true spirit of selection, the true art of omission. If he be not among the greatest prose writers of our literature he is, at least, our greatest artist in prose; and though it may be admitted that the best style is that which seems an unconscious result rather than a conscious aim, still in these latter days when violent rhetoric does duty for eloquence and vulgarity usurps the name of nature, we should be grateful for a style that deliberately aims at perfection of form, that seeks to produce its effect by artistic means and sets before itself an ideal of grave and chastened beauty.

Imaginary Portraits. By Walter Pater, M.A., Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford. (Macmillan and Co.)

MR. MORRIS'S COMPLETION OF THE *ODYSSEY*

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, November 24, 1887.)

Mr. Morris's second volume brings the great romantic epic of Greek literature to its perfect conclusion, and although there can never be an ultimate translation of either *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, as each successive age is sure to find pleasure in rendering

the two poems in its own manner and according to its own canons of taste, still it is not too much to say that Mr. Morris's version will always be a true classic amongst our classical translations. It is not, of course, flawless. In our notice of the first volume we ventured to say that Mr. Morris was sometimes far more Norse than Greek, nor does the volume that now lies before us make us alter that opinion. The particular metre, also, selected by Mr. Morris, although admirably adapted to express "the strong-winged music of Homer," as far as its flow and freedom are concerned, misses something of its dignity and calm. Here, it must be admitted, we feel a distinct loss, for there is in Homer not a little of Milton's lofty manner, and if swiftness be an essential of the Greek hexameter, stateliness is one of its distinguishing qualities in Homer's hands. This defect, however, if we must call it a defect, seems almost unavoidable, as for certain metrical reasons a majestic movement in English verse is necessarily a slow movement; and, after all that can be said is said, how really admirable is this whole translation! If we set aside its noble qualities as a poem and look on it purely from the scholar's point of view, how straightforward it is, how honest and direct! Its fidelity to

the original is far beyond that of any other verse-translation in our literature, and yet it is not the fidelity of a pedant to his text but rather the fine loyalty of poet to poet.

When Mr. Morris's first volume appeared many of the critics complained that his occasional use of archaic words and unusual expressions robbed his version of the true Homeric simplicity. This, however, is not a very felicitous criticism, for while Homer is undoubtedly simple in his clearness and largeness of vision, his wonderful power of direct narration, his wholesome sanity, and the purity and precision of his method, simple in language he undoubtedly is not. What he was to his contemporaries we have, of course, no means of judging, but we know that the Athenian of the fifth century B.C. found him in many places difficult to understand, and when the creative age was succeeded by the age of criticism and Alexandria began to take the place of Athens as the centre of culture for the Hellenistic world, Homeric dictionaries and glossaries seem to have been constantly published. Indeed, Athenæus tells us of a wonderful Byzantine blue-stocking, a *précieuse* from the Propontis, who wrote a long hexameter poem, called *Mnemosyne,* full of ingenious com-

mentaries on difficulties in Homer, and in fact, it is evident that, as far as the language is concerned, such a phrase as "Homeric simplicity" would have rather amazed an ancient Greek. As for Mr. Morris's tendency to emphasize the etymological meaning of words, a point commented on with somewhat flippant severity in a recent number of *Macmillan's Magazine,* here Mr. Morris seems to us to be in complete accord, not merely with the spirit of Homer, but with the spirit of all early poetry. It is quite true that language is apt to degenerate into a system of almost algebraic symbols, and the modern city-man who takes a ticket for Blackfriars Bridge, naturally never thinks of the Dominican monks who once had their monastery by Thames-side, and after whom the spot is named. But in earlier times it was not so. Men were then keenly conscious of the real meaning of words, and early poetry, especially, is full of this feeling, and, indeed, may be said to owe to it no small portion of its poetic power and charm. These old words, then, and this old use of words which we find in Mr. Morris's *Odyssey* can be amply justified upon historical grounds, and as for their artistic effect, it is quite excellent. Pope tried to put Homer into the ordinary lan-

guage of his day, with what result we know only too well; but Mr. Morris, who uses his archaisms with the tact of a true artist, and to whom indeed they seem to come absolutely naturally, has succeeded in giving to his version by their aid that touch, not of "quaintness," for Homer is never quaint, but of old-world romance and old-world beauty, which we moderns find so pleasurable, and to which the Greeks themselves were so keenly sensitive.

As for individual passages of special merit, Mr. Morris's translation is no robe of rags sewn with purple patches for critics to sample. Its real value lies in the absolute rightness and coherence of the whole, in the grand architecture of the swift, strong verse, and in the fact that the standard is not merely high but everywhere sustained. It is impossible, however, to resist the temptation of quoting Mr. Morris's rendering of that famous passage in the twenty-third book of the epic, in which Odysseus eludes the trap laid for him by Penelope, whose very faith in the certainty of her husband's return makes her sceptical of his identity when he stands before her; an instance, by the way, of Homer's wonderful psychological knowledge of human nature, as it is always the

dreamer himself who is most surprised when his dream comes true.

"Thus she spake to prove her husband; but Odysseus, grieved at heart,
Spake thus unto his bed-mate well-skilled in gainful art:
'O woman, thou sayest a word exceeding grievous to me!
Who hath otherwise shifted my bedstead? full hard for him should it be,
For as deft as he were, unless soothly a very God come here,
Who easily, if he willed it, might shift it otherwhere.
But no mortal man is living, how strong soe'er in his youth,
Who shall lightly hale it elsewhere, since a mighty wonder forsooth
Is wrought in that fashioned bedstead, and I wrought it, and I alone.
In the close grew a thicket of olive, a long-leaved tree full-grown,
That flourished and grew goodly as big as a pillar about,

So round it I built my bride-room, till I did the work right out
With ashlar stone close-fitting; and I roofed it overhead,
And thereto joined doors I made me, well-fitting in their stead.
Then I lopped away the boughs of the long-leafed olive-tree,
And, shearing the bole from the root up full well and cunningly,
I planed it about with the brass, and set the rule thereto,
And shaping thereof a bed-post, with the wimble I bored it through.
So beginning, I wrought out the bedstead, and finished it utterly,
And with gold enwrought it about, and with silver and ivory,
And stretched on it a thong of oxhide with the purple dye made bright.
Thus then the sign I have shown thee; nor, woman, know I aright
If my bed yet bideth steadfast, or if to another place
Some man hath moved it, and smitten the olive-bole from its base.'"

These last twelve books of the *Odyssey* have not the same marvel of romance, adventure and colour that we find in the earlier part of the epic. There is nothing in them that we can compare to the exquisite idyll of Nausicaa or to the Titanic humour of the episode in the Cyclops' cave. Penelope has not the glamour of Circe, and the song of the Sirens may sound sweeter than the whizz of the arrows of Odysseus as he stands on the threshold of his hall. Yet, for sheer intensity of passionate power, for concentration of intellectual interest and for masterly dramatic construction, these latter books are quite unequalled. Indeed, they show very clearly how it was that, as Greek art developed, the epos passed into the drama. The whole scheme of the argument, the return of the hero in disguise, his disclosure of himself to his son, his terrible vengeance on his enemies and his final recognition by his wife, reminds us of the plot of more than one Greek play, and shows us what the great Athenian poet meant when he said that his own dramas were merely scraps from Homer's table. In rendering this splendid poem into English verse, Mr. Morris has done our literature a service that can hardly be overestimated, and it is pleasant to think that, even

should the classics be entirely excluded from our educational systems, the English boy will still be able to know something of Homer's delightful tales, to catch an echo of his grand music and to wander with the wise Odysseus round "the shores of old romance."

The Odyssey of Homer. Done into English Verse by William Morris, Author of *The Earthly Paradise.* Volume II. (Reeves and Turner.)

ARISTOTLE AT AFTERNOON TEA.

(*Pall Mall Gazette,* December 16, 1887.)

In society, says Mr. Mahaffy, every civilized man and woman ought to feel it their duty to say something, even when there is hardly anything to be said, and, in order to encourage this delightful art of brilliant chatter, he has published a social guide without which no *débutante* or dandy should ever dream of going out to dine. Not that Mr. Mahaffy's book can be said to be, in any sense of the word, popular. In discussing this important subject of conversation, he has not merely followed the scientific method of Aristotle which is, perhaps, excusable, but he has adopted the literary style of Aristotle for which no excuse is possible. There is, also, hardly a single anecdote, hardly a

single illustration, and the reader is left to put the Professor's abstract rules into practice, without either the examples or the warnings of history to encourage or to dissuade him in his reckless career. Still, the book can be warmly recommended to all who propose to substitute the vice of verbosity for the stupidity of silence. It fascinates in spite of its form and pleases in spite of its pedantry, and is the nearest approach, that we know of, in modern literature to meeting Aristotle at an afternoon tea.

As regards physical conditions, the only one that is considered by Mr. Mahaffy as being absolutely essential to a good conversationalist, is the possession of a musical voice. Some learned writers have been of opinion that a slight stammer often gives peculiar zest to conversation, but Mr. Mahaffy rejects this view and is extremely severe on every eccentricity from a native brogue to an artificial catch-word. With his remarks on the latter point, the meaningless repetition of phrases, we entirely agree. Nothing can be more irritating than the scientific person who is always saying *"Exactly so,"* or the commonplace person who ends every sentence with *"Don't you know?"* or the pseudo-artistic person who murmurs

"Charming, charming," on the smallest provocation. It is, however, with the mental and moral qualifications for conversation that Mr. Mahaffy specially deals. Knowledge he, naturally, regards as an absolute essential, for, as he most justly observes, "an ignorant man is seldom agreeable, except as a butt." Upon the other hand, strict accuracy should be avoided. "Even a consummate liar," says Mr. Mahaffy, is a better ingredient in a company than "the scrupulously truthful man, who weighs every statement, questions every fact, and corrects every inaccuracy." The liar at any rate recognizes that recreation, not instruction, is the aim of conversation, and is a far more civilized being than the blockhead who loudly expresses his disbelief in a story which is told simply for the amusement of the company. Mr. Mahaffy, however, makes an exception in favour of the eminent specialist and tells us that intelligent questions addressed to an astronomer, or a pure mathematician, will elicit many curious facts which will pleasantly beguile the time. Here, in the interest of Society, we feel bound to enter a formal protest. Nobody, even in the provinces, should ever be allowed to ask an intelligent question about pure mathematics across a dinner-

table. A question of this kind is quite as bad as inquiring suddenly about the state of a man's soul, a sort of *coup* which, as Mr. Mahaffy remarks elsewhere, "many pious people have actually thought a decent introduction to a conversation."

As for the moral qualifications of a good talker, Mr. Mahaffy, following the example of his great master, warns us against any disproportionate excess of virtue. Modesty, for instance, may easily become a social vice, and to be continually apologizing for one's ignorance or stupidity is a grave injury to conversation, for, "what we want to learn from each member is his free opinion on the subject in hand, not his own estimate of the value of that opinion." Simplicity, too, is not without its dangers. The *enfant terrible,* with his shameless love of truth, the raw country-bred girl who always says what she means, and the plain, blunt man who makes a point of speaking his mind on every possible occasion, without ever considering whether he has a mind at all, are the fatal examples of what simplicity leads to. Shyness may be a form of vanity, and reserve a development of pride, and as for sympathy, what can be more detestable than the man, or woman, who insists on agreeing with everybody, and so

makes "a discussion, which implies differences in opinion," absolutely impossible? Even the unselfish listener is apt to become a bore. "These silent people," says Mr. Mahaffy, "not only take all they can get in Society for nothing, but they take it without the smallest gratitude, and have the audacity afterwards to censure those who have laboured for their amusement." Tact, which is an exquisite sense of the symmetry of things, is, according to Mr. Mahaffy, the highest and best of all the moral conditions for conversation. The man of tact, he most wisely remarks, "will instinctively avoid jokes about Blue Beard" in the company of a woman who is a man's third wife; he will never be guilty of talking like a book, but will rather avoid too careful an attention to grammar and the rounding of periods; he will cultivate the art of graceful interruption, so as to prevent a subject being worn threadbare by the aged or the inexperienced; and should he be desirous of telling a story, he will look around and consider each member of the party, and if there be a single stranger present will forego the pleasure of anecdotage rather than make the social mistake of hurting even one of the guests. As for prepared or premeditated art, Mr. Mahaffy has a

great contempt for it and tells us of a certain college don (let us hope not at Oxford or Cambridge) who always carried a jest-book in his pocket and had to refer to it when he wished to make a repartee. Great wits, too, are often very cruel, and great humorists often very vulgar, so it will be better to try and "make good conversation without any large help from these brilliant but dangerous gifts."

In a *têtz-à-tête* one should talk about persons, and in general Society about things. The state of the weather is always an excusable exordium, but it is convenient to have a paradox or heresy on the subject always ready so as to direct the conversation into other channels. Really domestic people are almost invariably bad talkers as their very virtues in home life have dulled their interest in outer things. The very best mothers will insist on chattering of their babies and prattling about infant education. In fact, most women do not take sufficient interest in politics, just as most men are deficient in general reading. Still anybody can be made to talk, except the very obstinate, and even a commercial traveller may be drawn out and become quite interesting. As for Society small talk, it is impossible, Mr. Mahaffy tells us,

for any sound theory of conversation to depreciate gossip, "which is perhaps the main factor in agreeable talk throughout Society." The retailing of small personal points about great people always gives pleasure, and if one is not fortunate enough to be an Arctic traveller or an escaped Nihilist, the best thing one can do is to relate some anecdote of "Prince Bismarck, or King Victor Emmanuel, or Mr. Gladstone." In the case of meeting a genius and a Duke at dinner, the good talker will try to raise himself to the level of the former and to bring the latter down to his own level. To succeed among one's social superiors one must have no hesitation in contradicting them. Indeed, one should make bold criticisms and introduce a bright and free tone into a Society whose grandeur and extreme respectability make it, Mr. Mahaffy remarks, as pathetically as inaccurately, "perhaps somewhat dull." The best conversationalists are those whose ancestors have been bilingual, like the French and Irish, but the art of conversation is really within the reach of almost every one, except those who are morbidly truthful, or whose high moral worth requires to be sustained by a permanent gravity of demeanour and a general dullness of mind.

These are the broad principles contained in Mr. Mahaffy's clever little book, and many of them will, no doubt, commend themselves to our readers. The maxim, "If you find the company dull, blame yourself," seems to us somewhat optimistic, and we have no sympathy at all with the professional story-teller who is really a great bore at a dinner-table; but Mr. Mahaffy is quite right in insisting that no bright social intercourse is possible without equality, and it is no objection to his book to say that it will not teach people how to talk cleverly. It is not logic that makes men reasonable, nor the science of ethics that makes men good, but it is always useful to analyse, to formularize and to investigate. The only thing to be regretted in the volume is the arid and jejune character of the style. If Mr. Mahaffy would only write as he talks, his book would be much pleasanter reading.

The Principles of the Art of Conversation: A Social Essay. By J. P. Mahaffy. (Macmillan and Co.)

EARLY CHRISTIAN ART IN IRELAND.

(*Pall Mall Gazette,* December 17, 1887.)

The want of a good series of popular handbooks on Irish art has long been felt, the works of Sir

William Wilde, Petrie and others being somewhat too elaborate for the ordinary student; so we are glad to notice the appearance, under the auspices of the Committee of Council on Education, of Miss Margaret Stokes's useful little volume on the early Christian art of her country. There is, of course, nothing particularly original in Miss Stokes's book, nor can she be said to be a very attractive or pleasing writer, but it is unfair to look for originality in primers, and the charm of the illustrations fully atones for the somewhat heavy and pedantic character of the style.

This early Christian art of Ireland is full of interest to the artist, the archæologist and the historian. In its rudest forms, such as the little iron hand-bell, the plain stone chalice and the rough wooden staff, it brings us back to the simplicity of the primitive Christian Church, while to the period of its highest development we owe the great masterpieces of Celtic metal-work. The stone chalice is now replaced by the chalice of silver and gold; the iron bell has its jewel-studded shrine, and the rough staff its gorgeous casing; rich caskets and splendid bindings preserve the holy books of the Saints and, instead of the rudely

carved symbol of the early missionaries, we have such beautiful works of art as the processional cross of Cong Abbey. Beautiful this cross certainly is with its delicate intricacy of ornamentation, its grace of proportion and its marvel of mere workmanship, nor is there any doubt about its history. From the inscriptions on it, which are corroborated by the annals of Innisfallen and the book of Clonmacnoise, we learn that it was made for King Turlough O'Connor by a native artist under the superintendence of Bishop O'Duffy, its primary object being to enshrine a portion of the true cross that was sent to the King in 1123. Brought to Cong some years afterwards, probably by the archbishop, who died there in 1150, it was concealed at the time of the Reformation, but at the beginning of the present century was still in the possession of the last abbot, and at his death it was purchased by Professor MacCullagh and presented by him to the museum of the Royal Irish Academy. This wonderful work is alone well worth a visit to Dublin, but not less lovely is the chalice of Ardagh, a two-handled silver cup, absolutely classical in its perfect purity of form, and decorated with gold and amber and crystal and with varieties of

cloisonné and *champlevé* enamel. There is no mention of this cup, or of the so-called Tara brooch, in ancient Irish history. All that we know of them is that they were found accidentally, the former by a boy who was digging potatoes near the old Rath of Ardagh, the latter by a poor child who picked it up near the seashore. They both, however, belong probably to the tenth century.

Of all these works, as well as of the bell shrines, book-covers, sculptured crosses and illuminated designs in manuscripts, excellent pictures are given in Miss Stokes's handbook. The extremely interesting *Fiachal Phadrig,* or shrine of St. Patrick's tooth, might have been figured and noted as an interesting example of the survival of ornament, and one of the old miniatures of the scribe or Evangelist writing would have given an additional interest to the chapter on Irish MSS. On the whole, however, the book is wonderfully well illustrated, and the ordinary art student will be able to get some useful suggestions from it. Indeed, Miss Stokes, echoing the aspirations of many of the great Irish archæologists, looks forward to the revival of a native Irish school in architecture, sculpture, metal-work and painting. Such an aspiration is, of course, very laudable,

but there is always a danger of these revivals being merely artificial reproductions, and it may be questioned whether the peculiar forms of Irish ornamentation could be made at all expressive of the modern spirit. A recent writer on house decoration has gravely suggested that the British householder should take his meals in a Celtic dining-room adorned with a dado of Ogham inscriptions, and such wicked proposals may serve as a warning to all who fancy that the reproduction of a form necessarily implies a revival of the spirit that gave the form life and meaning, and who fail to recognize the difference between art and anachronisms. Miss Stokes's proposal for an ark-shaped church in which the mural painter is to repeat the arcades and "follow the architectural compositions of the grand pages of the Eusebian canons in the Book of Kells," has, of course, nothing grotesque about it, but it is not probable that the artistic genius of the Irish people will, even when "the land has rest," find in such interesting imitations its healthiest or best expression. Still, there are certain elements of beauty in ancient Irish art that the modern artist would do well to study. The value of the intricate illuminations in the Book of Kells, as

far as their adaptability to modern designs and modern material goes, has been very much overrated, but in the ancient Irish torques, brooches, pins, clasps and the like, the modern goldsmith will find a rich and, comparatively speaking, an untouched field; and now that the Celtic spirit has become the leaven of our politics, there is no reason why it should not contribute something to our decorative art. This result, however, will not be obtained by a patriotic misuse of old designs, and even the most enthusiastic Home Ruler must not be allowed to decorate his dining-room with a dado of Oghams.

Early Christian Art in Ireland. By Margaret Stokes. (Published for the Committee of Council on Education by Chapman and Hall.)

ENGLISH POETESSES.

(*Queen,* December 8, 1888.)

England has given to the world one great poetess, Elizabeth Barrett Browning. By her side Mr. Swinburne would place Miss Christina Rossetti, whose New Year hymn he describes as so much the noblest of sacred poems in our language, that there is none which comes near it

enough to stand second. "It is a hymn," he tells us, "touched as with the fire, and bathed as in the light of sunbeams, tuned as to chords and cadences of refluent sea-music beyond reach of harp and organ, large echoes of the serene and sonorous tides of heaven." Much as I admire Miss Rossetti's work, her subtle choice of words, her rich imagery, her artistic naïveté, wherein curious notes of strangeness and simplicity are fantastically blended together, I cannot but think that Mr. Swinburne has, with noble and natural loyality, placed her on too lofty a pedestal. To me, she is simply a very delightful artist in poetry. This is indeed something so rare that when we meet it we cannot fail to love it, but it is not everything. Beyond it and above it are higher and more sunlit heights of song, a larger vision, and an ampler air, a music at once more passionate and more profound, a creative energy that is born of the spirit, a winged rapture that is born of the soul, a force and fervour of mere utterance that has all the wonder of the prophet, and not a little of the consecration of the priest.

Mrs. Browning is unapproachable by any woman who has ever touched lyre or blown through reed since the days of the great Æolian poetess.

But Sappho, who to the antique world was a pillar of flame, is to us but a pillar of shadow. Of her poems, burnt with other most precious work by Byzantine Emperor and by Roman Pope, only a few fragments remain. Possibly they lie mouldering in the scented darkness of an Egyptian tomb, clasped in the withered hand of some long-dead lover. Some Greek monk at Athos may even now be poring over an ancient manuscript, whose crabbed characters conceal lyric or ode by her whom the Greeks spoke of as "the Poetess" just as they termed Homer "the Poet," who was to them the tenth Muse, the flower of the Graces, the child of Erôs, and the pride of Hellas—Sappho, with the sweet voice, the bright, beautiful eyes, the dark hyacinth coloured hair. But, practically, the work of the marvellous singer of Lesbos is entirely lost to us.

We have a few rose-leaves out of her garden, that is all. Literature nowadays survives marble and bronze, but in the old days, in spite of the Roman poet's noble boast, it was not so. The fragile clay vases of the Greeks still keep for us pictures of Sappho, delicately painted in black and red and white; but of her song we have only the echo of an echo.

Of all the women of history, Mrs. Browning is the only one that we could name in any possible or remote conjunction with Sappho.

Sappho was undoubtedly a far more flawless and perfect artist. She stirred the whole antique world more than Mrs. Browning ever stirred our modern age. Never had Love such a singer. Even in the few lines that remain to us the passion seems to scorch and burn. But, as unjust Time, who has crowned her with the barren laurels of fame, has twined with them the dull poppies of oblivion, let us turn from mere memory of a poetess to one whose song still remains to us as an imperishable glory to our literature; to her who heard the cry of the children from the dark mine and crowded factory, and made England weep over its little ones; who, in the feigned sonnets from the Portuguese, sang of the spiritual mystery of Love, and of the intellectual gifts that Love brings to the soul; who had faith in all that is worthy, and enthusiasm for all that is great, and pity for all that suffers; who wrote the *Vision of Poets* and *Casa Guidi Windows* and *Aurora Leigh*.

As one, to whom I owe my love of poetry no less than my love of country, said of her:

"Still on our ears
The clear 'Excelsior' from a woman's lip
Rings out across the Apennines, although
The woman's brow lies pale and cold in death
With all the mighty marble dead in Florence.
For while great songs can stir the hearts of men,
Spreading their full vibrations through the world
In ever-widening circles till they reach
The Throne of God, and song becomes a prayer,
And prayer brings down the liberating strength
That kindles nations to heroic deeds,
She lives—the great-souled poetess who saw
From Casa Guidi windows Freedom dawn
On Italy, and gave the glory back
In sunrise hymns to all Humanity!"

She lives indeed, and not alone in the heart of Shakespeare's England, but in the heart of Dante's Italy also. To Greek literature she owed her scholarly culture, but modern Italy created her human passion for Liberty. When she crossed the Alps she became filled with a new ardour, and from that fine, eloquent mouth, that we can still see in her portraits, broke forth such a noble and majestic outburst of lyrical song as had not been heard from woman's lips for more than two

thousand years. It is pleasant to think that an English poetess was to a certain extent a real factor in bringing about that unity of Italy that was Dante's dream, and if Florence drove her great singer into exile, she at least welcomed within her walls the later singer that England had sent to her.

If one were asked the chief qualities of Mrs. Browning's work, one would say, as Mr. Swinburne said of Byron's, its sincerity and its strength. Faults it, of course, possesses. "She would rhyme moon to table," used to be said of her in jest; and certainly no more monstrous rhymes are to be found in all literature than some of those we come across in Mrs. Browning's poems. But her ruggedness was never the result of carelessness. It was deliberate, as her letters to Mr. Horne show very clearly. She refused to sandpaper her muse. She disliked facile smoothness and artificial polish. In her very rejection of art she was an artist. She intended to produce a certain effect by certain means, and she succeeded; and her indifference to complete assonance in rhyme often gives a splendid richness to her verse, and brings into it a pleasurable element of surprise.

In philosophy she was a Platonist, in politics an Opportunist. She attached herself to no particular party. She loved the people when they were king-like, and kings when they showed themselves to be men. Of the real value and motive of poetry she had a most exalted idea. "Poetry," she says, in the preface of one of her volumes, "has been as serious a thing to me as life itself; and life has been a very serious thing. There has been no playing at skittles for me in either. I never mistook pleasure for the final cause of poetry, nor leisure for the hour of the poet. I have done my work so far, not as mere hand and head work apart from the personal being, but as the completest expression of that being to which I could attain."

It certainly is her completest expression, and through it she realizes her fullest perfection. "The poet," she says elsewhere, "is at once richer and poorer than he used to be; he wears better broadcloth, but speaks no more oracles." These words give us the keynote to her view of the poet's mission. He was to utter Divine oracles, to be at once inspired prophet and holy priest; and as such we may, I think, without exaggeration, conceive her. She was a Sibyl delivering a

message to the world, sometimes through stammering lips, and once at least with blinded eyes, yet always with the true fire and fervour of lofty and unshaken faith, always with the great raptures of a spiritual nature, the high ardours of an impassioned soul. As we read her best poems we feel that, though Apollo's shrine be empty and the bronze tripod overthrown, and the vale of Delphi desolate, still the Pythia is not dead. In our own age she has sung for us, and this land gave her new birth. Indeed, Mrs. Browning is the wisest of the Sibyls, wiser even than that mighty figure whom Michael Angelo has painted on the roof of the Sistine Chapel at Rome, poring over the scroll of mystery, and trying to decipher the secrets of Fate; for she realized that, while knowledge is power, suffering is part of knowledge.

To her influence, almost as much as to the higher education of women, I would be inclined to attribute the really remarkable awakening of woman's song that characterizes the latter half of our century in England. No country has ever had so many poetesses at once. Indeed, when one remembers that the Greeks had only nine muses, one is sometimes apt to fancy that we have too many. And yet the work done by women in

the sphere of poetry is really of a very high standard of excellence. In England we have always been prone to underrate the value of tradition in literature. In our eagerness to find a new voice and a fresh mode of music, we have forgotten how beautiful Echo may be. We look first for individuality and personality, and these are, indeed, the chief characteristics of the masterpieces of our literature, either in prose or verse; but deliberate culture and a study of the best models, if united to an artistic temperament and a nature susceptible of exquisite impressions, may produce much that is admirable, much that is worthy of praise. It would be quite impossible to give a complete catalogue of all the women who since Mrs. Browning's day have tried lute and lyre. Mrs. Pfeiffer, Mrs. Hamilton King, Mrs. Augusta Webster, Graham Tomson, Miss Mary Robinson, Jean Ingelow, Miss May Kendall, Miss Nesbit, Miss May Probyn, Mrs. Craik, Mrs. Meynell, Miss Chapman, and many others have done really good work in poetry, either in the grave Dorian mode of thoughtful and intellectual verse, or in the light and graceful forms of old French song, or in the romantic manner of antique ballad, or in that "moment's monument,"

as Rossetti called it, the intense and concentrated sonnet. Occasionally one is tempted to wish that the quick, artistic faculty that women undoubtedly possess developed itself somewhat more in prose and somewhat less in verse. Poetry is for our highest moods, when we wish to be with the gods, and in our poetry nothing but the very best should satisfy us; but prose is for our daily bread, and the lack of good prose is one of the chief blots on our culture. French prose, even in the hands of the most ordinary writers, is always readable, but English prose is detestable. We have a few, a very few, masters, such as they are. We have Carlyle, who should not be imitated; and Mr. Pater, who, through the subtle perfection of his form, is inimitable absolutely; and Mr. Froude, who is useful; and Matthew Arnold, who is a model; and Mr. George Meredith, who is a warning; and Mr. Lang, who is the divine amateur; and Mr. Stevenson, who is the humane artist; and Mr. Ruskin, whose rhythm and colour and fine rhetoric and marvellous music of words are entirely unattainable. But the general prose that one reads in magazines and in newspapers is terribly dull and cumbrous, heavy in movement and uncouth or exaggerated in

expression. Possibly some day our women of letters will apply themselves more definitely to prose.

Their light touch, and exquisite ear, and delicate sense of balance and proportion would be of no small service to us. I can fancy women bringing a new manner into our literature.

However, we have to deal here with women as poetesses, and it is interesting to note that, though Mrs. Browning's influence undoubtedly contributed very largely to the development of this new song-movement, if I may so term it, still there seems to have been never a time during the last three hundred years when the women of this kingdom did not cultivate, if not the art, at least the habit, of writing poetry.

Who the first English poetess was I cannot say. I believe it was the Abbess Juliana Berners, who lived in the fifteenth century; but I have no doubt that Mr. Freeman would be able at a moment's notice to produce some wonderful Saxon or Norman poetess, whose works cannot be read without a glossary, and even with its aid are completely unintelligible. For my own part, I am content with the Abbess Juliana, who wrote enthusiastically about hawking; and after her I would

mention Anne Askew, who in prison and on the eve of her fiery martyrdom wrote a ballad that has, at any rate, a pathetic and historical interest. Queen Elizabeth's "most sweet and sententious ditty" on Mary Stuart is highly praised by Puttenham, a contemporary critic, as an example of "Exargasia, or the Gorgeous in Literature," which somehow seems a very suitable epithet for such a great Queen's poems. The term she applies to the unfortunate Queen of Scots, "the daughter of debate," has, of course, long since passed into literature. The Countess of Pembroke, Sir Philip Sidney's sister, was much admired as a poetess in her day.

In 1613 the "learned, virtuous, and truly noble ladie," Elizabeth Carew, published a *Tragedie of Mariam, the Faire Queene of Jewry,* and a few years later the "noble ladie Diana Primrose" wrote *A Chain of Pearl,* which is a panegyric on the "peerless graces" of Gloriana. Mary Morpeth, the friend and admirer of Drummond of Hawthornden; Lady Mary Wroth, to whom Ben Jonson dedicated *The Alchemist;* and the Princess Elizabeth, the sister of Charles I., should also be mentioned.

After the Restoration women applied them-

selves with still greater ardour to the study of literature and the practice of poetry. Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, was a true woman of letters, and some of her verses are extremely pretty and graceful. Mrs. Aphra Behn was the first Englishwoman who adopted literature as a regular profession. Mrs. Katharine Philips, according to Mr. Gosse, invented sentimentality. As she was praised by Dryden, and mourned by Cowley, let us hope she may be forgiven. Keats came across her poems at Oxford when he was writing *Endymion,* and found in one of them "a most delicate fancy of the Fletcher kind"; but I fear nobody reads the Matchless Orinda now. Of Lady Winchelsea's *Nocturnal Reverie* Wordsworth said that, with the exception of Pope's *Windsor Forest,* it was the only poem of the period intervening between *Paradise Lost* and Thomson's *Seasons* that contained a single new image of external nature. Lady Rachel Russell, who may be said to have inaugurated the letter-writing literature of England; Eliza Haywood, who is immortalized by the badness of her work, and has a niche in *The Dunciad;* and the Marchioness of Wharton, whose poems Waller said he admired, are very remarkable types, the finest

of them being, of course, the first named, who was a woman of heroic mould and of a most noble dignity of nature.

Indeed, though the English poetesses up to the time of Mrs. Browning cannot be said to have produced any work of absolute genius, they are certainly interesting figures, fascinating subjects for study. Amongst them we find Lady Mary Wortley Montague, who had all the caprice of Cleopatra, and whose letters are delightful reading; Mrs. Centlivre, who wrote one brilliant comedy; Lady Anne Barnard, whose *Auld Robin Gray* was described by Sir Walter Scott as "worth all the dialogues Corydon and Phillis have together spoken from the days of Theocritus downwards," and is certainly a very beautiful and touching poem; Esther Vanhomrigh and Hester Johnson, the Vanessa and the Stella of Dean Swift's life; Mrs. Thrale, the friend of the great lexicographer; the worthy Mrs. Barbauld; the excellent Miss Hannah More; the industrious Joanna Baillie; the admirable Mrs. Chapone, whose *Ode to Solitude* always fills me with the wildest passion for society, and who will at least be remembered as the patroness of the establishment at which Becky Sharp was educated; Miss

Anna Seward, who was called "The Swan of Lichfield"; poor L. E. L., whom Disraeli described in one of his clever letters to his sister as "the personification of Brompton—pink satin dress, white satin shoes, red cheeks, snub nose, and her hair *à la* Sappho"; Mrs. Ratcliffe, who introduced the romantic novel, and has consequently much to answer for; the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, of whom Gibbon said that she was "made for something better than a Duchess"; the two wonderful sisters, Lady Dufferin and Mrs. Norton; Mrs. Tighe, whose *Psyche* Keats read with pleasure; Constantia Grierson, a marvellous bluestocking in her time; Mrs. Hemans; pretty, charming "Perdita," who flirted alternately with poetry and the Prince Regent, played divinely in the *Winter's Tale,* was brutally attacked by Gifford, and has left us a pathetic little poem on a Snowdrop; and Emily Brontë, whose poems are instinct with tragic power, and seem often on the verge of being great.

Old fashions in literature are not so pleasant as old fashions in dress. I like the costume of the age of powder better than the poetry of the age of Pope. But if one adopts the historical standpoint—and this is, indeed, the only stand-

point from which we can ever form a fair estimate of work that is not absolutely of the highest order—we cannot fail to see that many of the English poetesses who preceded Mrs. Browning were women of no ordinary talent, and that if the majority of them looked upon poetry simply as a department of *belles lettres,* so in most cases did their contemporaries. Since Mrs. Browning's day our woods have become full of singing birds, and if I venture to ask them to apply themselves more to prose and less to song, it is not that I like poetical prose, but that I love the prose of poets.

VENUS OR VICTORY.

(*Pall Mall Gazette,* February 24, 1888.)

There are certain problems in archæology that seem to possess a real romantic interest, and a foremost among these is the question of the so-called Venus of Melos. Who is she, this marble mutilated goddess whom Gautier loved, to whom Heine bent his knee? What sculptor wrought her, and for what shrine? Whose hands walled her up in that rude niche where the Melian peasant found her? What symbol of her divinity did she

carry? Was it apple of gold or shield of bronze? Where is her city and what was her name among gods and men? The last writer on this fascinating subject is Mr. Stillman, who in a most interesting book recently published in America, claims that the work of art in question is no sea-born and foam-born Aphrodite, but the very Victory Without Wings that once stood in the little chapel outside the gates of the Acropolis at Athens. So long ago as 1826, that is to say six years after the discovery of the statue, the Venus hypothesis was violently attacked by Millingen, and from that time to this the battle of the archæologists has never ceased. Mr. Stillman, who fights, of course, under Millingen's banner, points out that the statue is not of the Venus type at all, being far too heroic in character to correspond to the Greek conception of Aphrodite at any period of their artistic development, but that it agrees distinctly with certain well-known statues of Victory, such as the celebrated "Victory of Brescia." The latter is in bronze, is later, and has the wings, but the type is unmistakable, and though not a reproduction it is certainly a recollection of the Melian statue. The reproduction of Victory on the coin of Agathocles is also obviously of the Melian type,

and in the museum of Naples is a terra-cotta Victory in almost the identical action and drapery. As for Dumont d'Urville's statement that, when the statue was discovered, one hand held an apple and the other a fold of the drapery, the latter is obviously a mistake, and the whole evidence on the subject is so contradictory that no reliance can be placed on the statement made by the French Consul and the French naval officers, none of whom seems to have taken the trouble to ascertain whether the arm and hand now in the Louvre were really found in the same niche as the statue at all. At any rate, these fragments seem to be of extremely inferior workmanship, and they are so imperfect that they are quite worthless as data for measure or opinion. So far, Mr. Stillman is on old ground. His real artistic discovery is this. In working about the Acropolis of Athens, some years ago, he photographed among other sculptures the mutilated Victories in the Temple of Nikè Apteros, the "Wingless Victory," the little Ionic temple in which stood that statue of Victory of which it was said that *"the Athenians made her without wings that she might never leave Athens."* Looking over the photographs afterwards, when the impression of the compara-

tively diminutive size had passed, he was struck with the close resemblance of the type to that of the Melian statue. Now, this resemblance is so striking that it cannot be questioned by any one who has an eye for form. There are the same large heroic proportions, the same ampleness of physical development, and the same treatment of drapery, and there is also that perfect spiritual kinship which, to any true antiquarian, is one of the most valuable modes of evidence. Now it is generally admitted on both sides that the Melian statue is probably Attic in its origin, and belongs certainly to the period between Phidias and Praxiteles, that is to say, to the age of Scopas, if it be not actually the work of Scopas himself; and as it is to Scopas that these bas-reliefs have been always attributed, the similarity of style can, on Mr. Stillman's hypothesis, be easily accounted for.

As regards the appearance of the statue in Melos, Mr. Stillman points out that Melos belonged to Athens as late as she had any Greek allegiance, and that it is probable that the statue was sent there for concealment on the occasion of some siege or invasion. When this took place, Mr. Stillman does not pretend to decide with

any degree of certainty, but it is evident that it must have been subsequent to the establishment of the Roman hegemony, as the brickwork of the niche in which the statue was found is clearly Roman in character, and before the time of Pausanias and Pliny, as neither of these antiquaries mentions the statue. Accepting, then, the statue as that of the Victory Without Wings, Mr. Stillman agrees with Millingen in supposing that in her left hand she held a bronze shield, the lower rim of which rested on the left knee where some marks of the kind are easily recognizable, while with her right hand she traced, or had just finished tracing, the names of the great heroes of Athens. Valentin's objection, that if this were so the left thigh would incline outwards so as to secure a balance, Mr. Stillman meets partly by the analogy of the Victory of Brescia and partly by the evidence of Nature herself; for he has had a model photographed in the same position as the statue and holding a shield in the manner he proposes in his restoration. The result is precisely the contrary to that which Valentin assumes. Of course, Mr. Stillman's solution of the whole matter must not be regarded as an absolutely scientific demonstration.

It is simply an induction in which a kind of artistic instinct, not communicable or equally valuable to all people, has had the greatest part, but to this mode of interpretation archæologists as a class have been far too indifferent; and it is certain that in the present case it has given us a theory which is most fruitful and suggestive.

The little temple of Nikè Apteros has had, as Mr. Stillman reminds us, a destiny unique of its kind. Like the Parthenon, it was standing little more than two hundred years ago, but during the Turkish occupation it was razed, and its stones all built into the great bastion which covered the front of the Acropolis and blocked up the staircase to the Propylæa. It was dug out and restored, nearly every stone in its place, by two German architects during the reign of Otho, and it stands again just as Pausanias described it on the spot where old Ægeus watched for the return of Theseus from Crete. In the distance are Salamis and Ægina, and beyond the purple hills lies Marathon. If the Melian statue be indeed the Victory Without Wings, she had no unworthy shrine.

There are some other interesting essays in Mr. Stillman's book on the wonderful topographical

knowledge of Ithaca displayed in the *Odyssey*, and discussions of this kind are always interesting as long as there is no attempt to represent Homer as the ordinary literary man; but the article on the Melian statue is by far the most important and the most delightful. Some people will, no doubt, regret the possibility of the disappearance of the old name, and as Venus not as Victory will still worship the stately goddess, but there are others who will be glad to see in her the image and ideal of that spiritual enthusiasm to which Athens owed her liberty, and by which alone can liberty be won.

On the Track of Ulysses; together with an Excursion in Quest of the So-called Venus of Melos. By W. J. Stillman. (Houghton, Mifflin and Co., Boston.)

M. CARO ON GEORGE SAND.

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 14, 1888.)

The biography of a very great man from the pen of a very ladylike writer—this is the best description we can give of M. Caro's Life of George Sand. The late Professor of the Sorbonne could chatter charmingly about culture, and had all the fascinating insincerity of an accomplished phrase-maker; being an extremely supe-

rior person he had a great contempt for Democracy and its doings, but he was always popular with the Duchesses of the Faubourg, as there was nothing in history or in literature that he could not explain away for their edification; having never done anything remarkable he was naturally elected a member of the Academy and he always remained loyal to the traditions of that thoroughly respectable and thoroughly pretentious institution. In fact, he was just the sort of man who should never have attempted to write a Life of George Sand or to interpret George Sand's genius. He was too feminine to appreciate the grandeur of that large womanly nature, too much of a *dilettante* to realize the masculine force of that strong and ardent mind. He never gets at the secret of George Sand, and never brings us near to her wonderful personality. He looks on her simply as a littérateur, as a writer of pretty stories of country life and of charming, if somewhat exaggerated, romances. But George Sand was much more than this. Beautiful as are such books as *Consuelo* and *Mauprat, François le Champi* and *La Mare au Diable,* yet in none of them is she adequately expressed, by none of them is she adequately revealed. As Mr. Matthew Arnold

said, many years ago, "We do not know George Sand unless we feel the spirit which goes through her work as a whole." With this spirit, however, M. Caro has no sympathy. Madame Sand's doctrines are antediluvian, he tells us, her philosophy is quite dead and her ideas of social regeneration are Utopian, incoherent and absurd. The best thing for us to do is to forget these silly dreams and to read *Teverino* and *Le Secrétaire Intime.* Poor M. Caro! This spirit, which he treats with such airy flippancy, is the very leaven of modern life. It is remoulding the world for us and fashioning our age anew. If it is antediluvian, it is so because the deluge is yet to come; if it is Utopian, then Utopia must be added to our geographies. To what curious straits M. Caro is driven by his violent prejudices may be estimated by the fact that he tries to class George Sand's *Chansons de geste,* the stories of adventure characteristic of primitive literatures; whereas in using fiction as a vehicle of thought, and romance as a means of influencing the social ideals of her age, George Sand was merely carrying out the traditions of Voltaire and Rousseau, of Diderot and of Chateaubriand. The novel, says M. Caro, must be allied either to poetry or to science. That it

has found in philosophy one of its strongest allies seems not to have occurred to him. In an English critic such a view might possibly be excusable. Our greatest novelists, such as Fielding, Scott and Thackeray, cared little for the philosophy of their age. But coming, as it does, from a French critic, the statement seems to show a strange want of recognition of one of the most important elements of French fiction. Nor, even in the narrow limits that he has imposed upon himself, can M. Caro be said to be a very fortunate or felicitious critic. To take merely one instance out of many, he says nothing of George Sand's delightful treatment of art and the artist's life. And yet how exquisitely does she analyse each separate art and present it to us in its relation to life! In *Consuelo* she tells us of music; in *Horace* of authorship; in *Le Château des Désertes* of acting; in *Les Maîtres Mosaïstes* of mosaic work; in *Le Château de Pictordu* of portrait painting; and in *La Daniella* of the painting of landscape. What Mr. Ruskin and Mr. Browning have done for England she did for France. She invented an art literature. It is unnecessary, however, to discuss any of M. Caro's minor failings, for the whole effect of the book, so far as it attempts to portray for us the scope and

character of George Sand's genius, is entirely spoiled by the false attitude assumed from the beginning, and though the dictum may seem to many harsh and exclusive, we cannot help feeling that an absolute incapacity for appreciating the spirit of a great writer is no qualification for writing a treatise on the subject.

As for Madame Sand's private life, which is so intimately connected with her art (for, like Goethe, she had to live her romances before she could write them), M. Caro says hardly anything about it. He passes it over with a modesty that almost makes one blush, and for fear of wounding the susceptibilities of those *grandes dames* whose passions M. Paul Bourget analyses with such subtlety, he transforms her mother, who was a typical French *grisette,* into "a very amiable and *spirituelle* milliner"! It must be admitted that Joseph Surface himself could hardly show greater tact and delicacy, though we ourselves must plead guilty to preferring Madame Sand's own description of her as an "enfant du vieux pavé de Paris."

George Sand. By the late Elmé Marie Caro. Translated by Gustave Masson, B.A., Assistant Master, Harrow School. "Great French Writers" Series. (Routledge and Sons.)

POETRY AND PRISON.

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, January 3, 1889.)

Prison has had an admirable effect on Mr. Wilfrid Blunt as a poet. The *Love Sonnets of Proteus*, in spite of their clever Musset-like modernities and their swift brilliant wit, were but affected or fantastic at best. They were simply the records of passing moods and moments, of which some were sad and others sweet, and not a few shameful. Their subject was not of high or serious import. They contained much that was wilful and weak. *In Vinculis*, upon the other hand, is a book that stirs one by its fine sincerity of purpose, its lofty and impassioned thought, its depth and ardour of intense feeling. "Imprisonment," says Mr. Blunt in his preface, "is a reality of discipline most useful to the modern soul, lapped as it is in physical sloth and self-indulgence. Like a sickness or a spiritual retreat it purifies and ennobles; and the soul emerges from it stronger and more self-contained." To him, certainly, it has been a mode of purification. The opening sonnets, composed in the bleak cell of Galway Gaol, and written down on the fly-

leaves of the prisoner's prayer-book, are full of things nobly conceived and nobly uttered and show that though Mr. Balfour may enforce "plain living" by his prison regulations, he cannot prevent "high thinking" or in any way limit or constrain the freedom of a man's soul. They are, of course, intensely personal in expression. They could not fail to be so. But the personality that they reveal has nothing petty or ignoble about it. The petulant cry of the shallow egoist which was the chief characteristic of the *Love Sonnets of Proteus* is not to be found here. In its place we have wild grief and terrible scorn, fierce rage and flame-like passion. Such a sonnet as the following comes out of the very fire of heart and brain:

"God knows, 'twas not with a fore-reasoned plan
I left the easeful dwellings of my peace,
And sought this combat with ungodly Man,
And ceaseless still through years that do not cease
Have warred with Powers and Principalities.
My natural soul, ere yet these strifes began,
Was a sister diligent to please
And loving all, and most the human clan.

God knows it. And he knows how the world's
tears
Touched me. And He is witness of my wrath,
How it was kindled against murderers
Who slew for gold, and how upon their path
I met them. Since which day the world in arms
Strikes at my life with angers and alarms."

And this sonnet has all the strange strength of that despair which is but the prelude to a larger hope:

"I thought to do a deed of chivalry,
An act of worth, which haply in her sight
Who was my mistress should recorded be
And of the nations. And, when thus the fight
Faltered and men once bold with faces white
Turned this and that way in excuse to flee,
I only stood, and by the foeman's might
Was overborne and mangled cruelly.

"Then crawled I to her feet, in whose dear cause
I made this venture, and 'Behold,' I said,
'How I am wounded for thee in these wars.'
But she, 'Poor cripple, would'st thou I should
wed

A limbless trunk?' and laughing turned from me.
Yet she was fair, and her name 'Liberty.'"

The sonnet beginning

"A prison is a convent without God—
Poverty, Chastity, Obedience
Its precepts are:"

is very fine; and this, written just after entering the gaol, is powerful:

"Naked I came into the world of pleasure,
And naked come I to this house of pain.
Here at the gate I lay down my life's treasure,
My pride, my garments and my name with men.
The world and I henceforth shall be as twain,
No sound of me shall pierce for good or ill
These walls of grief. Nor shall I hear the vain
Laughter and tears of those who love me still.

"Within, what new life waits me! Little ease,
Cold lying, hunger, nights of wakefulness,
Harsh orders given, no voice to soothe or please,
Poor thieves for friends, for books rules meaningless:

This is the grave—nay, hell. Yet, Lord of Might,
Still in Thy light my spirit shall see light."

But, indeed, all the sonnets are worth reading, and *The Canon of Aughrim,* the longest poem in the book, is a most masterly and dramatic description of the tragic life of the Irish peasant. Literature is not much indebted to Mr. Balfour for his sophistical *Defence of Philosophic Doubt,* which is one of the dullest books we know, but it must be admitted that by sending Mr. Blunt to gaol he has converted a clever rhymer into an earnest and deep-thinking poet. The narrow confines of a prison cell seem to suit the "sonnet's scanty plot of ground," and an unjust imprisonment for a noble cause strengthens as well as deepens the nature.

In Vinculis. By Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Author of *The Wind and the Whirlwind, The Love Sonnets of Proteus, etc. etc.* (Kegan Paul.)

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO WALT WHITMAN.

(*Pall Mall Gazette,* January 25, 1889.)

"No one will get to my verses who insists upon viewing them as a literary performance . . .

or as aiming mainly towards art and æstheticism." "*Leaves of Grass* . . . has mainly been the out-cropping of my own emotional and other personal nature—an attempt, from first to last, to put *a Person,* a human being (myself, in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century in America,) freely, fully and truly on record. I could not find any similar personal record in current literature that satisfied me." In these words Walt Whitman gives us the true attitude we should adopt towards his work, having, indeed, a much saner view of the value and meaning of that work than either his eloquent admirers or noisy detractors can boast of possessing. His last book, *November Boughs,* as he calls it, published in the winter of the old man's life, reveals to us, not indeed a soul's tragedy, for its last note is one of joy and hope, and noble and unshaken faith in all that is fine and worthy of such faith, but certainly the drama of a human soul, and puts on record with a simplicity that has in it both sweetness and strength the record of his spiritual development, and of the aim and motive both of the manner and the matter of his work. His strange mode of expression is shown in these pages to have been the result of deliberate and self-conscious

choice. The "barbaric yawp" which he sent over "the roofs of the world" so many years ago, and which wrung from Mr. Swinburne's lip such lofty panegyric in song and such loud clamorous censure in prose, appears here in what will be to many an entirely new light. For in his very rejection of art Walt Whitman is an artist. He tried to produce a certain effect by certain means and he succeeded. There is much method in what many have termed his madness, too much method, indeed, some may be tempted to fancy.

In the story of his life, as he tells it to us, we find him at the age of sixteen beginning a definite and philosophical study of literature:

"Summers and falls, I used to go off, sometimes for a week at a stretch, down in the country, or to Long Island's seashores—there, in the presence of outdoor influences, I went over thoroughly the Old and New Testaments, and absorb'd (probably to better advantage for me than in any library or indoor room—it makes such difference *where* you read) Shakespeare, Ossian, the best translated versions I could get of Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, the old German Nibelungen, the ancient Hindoo poems, and one or two other masterpieces,

Dante's among them. As it happen'd, I read the latter mostly in an old wood. The *Iliad* . . . I read first thoroughly on the peninsula of Orient, northeast end of Long Island, in a shelter'd hollow of rock and sand, with the sea on each side. (I have wonder'd since why I was not overwhelm'd by those mighty masters. Likely because I read them, as described, in the full presence of Nature, under the sun, with the far-spreading landscapes and vistas, or the sea rolling in.)"

Edgar Allan Poe's amusing bit of dogmatism that, for our occasions and our day, "there can be no such thing as a long poem," fascinated him. "The same thought had been haunting my mind before," he said, "but Poe's argument . . . the English translation of the Bible seems to work'd the sum out, and proved it to me," and have suggested to him the possibility of a poetic form which, while retaining the spirit of poetry, would still be free from the trammels of rhyme and of a definite metrical system. Having thus, to a certain degree, settled upon what one might call the "technique" of Whitmanism, he began to brood upon the nature of that spirit which was to give life to the strange form. The central

point of the poetry of the future seemed to him to be necessarily "an identical body and soul, a personality," in fact, which personality, he tells us frankly, "after many considerations and ponderings I deliberately settled should be myself." However, for the true creation and revealing of this personality, at first only dimly felt, a new stimulus was needed. This came from the Civil War. After describing the many dreams and passions of his boyhood and early manhood, he goes on to say:

"These, however, and much more might have gone on and come to naught (almost positively would have come to naught,) if a sudden, vast, terrible, direct and indirect stimulus for new and national declamatory expression had not been given to me. It is certain, I say, that although I had made a start before, only from the occurrence of the Secession War, and what it show'd me as by flashes of lightning, with the emotional depths it sounded and arous'd (of course, I don't mean in my own heart only, I saw it just as plainly in others, in millions)—that only, from the strong flare and provocation of that war's sights and scenes the final reasons-for-being of an autochthonic and passionate song definitely came forth.

"I went down to the war fields of Virginia . . . lived thenceforward in camp—saw great battles and the days and nights afterward—partook of all the fluctuations, gloom, despair, hopes again arous'd, courage evoked—death readily risk'd—*the cause,* too—along and filling those agonistic and lurid following years . . . The real parturition years . . . of this henceforth homogeneous Union. Without those three or four years and the experiences they gave, *Leaves of Grass* would not now be existing."

Having thus obtained the necessary stimulus for the quickening and awakening of the personal self, some day to be endowed with universality, he sought to find new notes of song, and, passing beyond the mere passion for expression, he aimed at "suggestiveness" first.

"I round and finish little, if anything; and could not, consistently with my scheme. The reader will have his or her part to do, just as much as I have had mine. I seek less to state or display any theme or thought, and more to bring you, reader, into the atmosphere of the theme or thought—there to pursue your own flight."

Another "impetus-word" is Comradeship, and other "word-signs" are Good Cheer, Content and Hope. Individuality, especially, he sought for:

"I have allow'd the stress of my poems from beginning to end to bear upon American individuality and assist it—not only because that is a great lesson in Nature, amid all her generalizing laws, but as counterpoise to the leveling tendencies of Democracy—and for other reasons. Defiant of ostensible literary and other conventions, I avowedly chant "the great pride of man in himself," and permit it to be more or less a *motif* of nearly all my verse. I think this pride is indispensable to an American. I think it not inconsistent with obedience, humility, deference, and self-questioning."

A new theme also was to be found in the relation of the sexes, conceived in a natural, simple and healthy form, and he protests against poor Mr. William Rossetti's attempt to Bowdlerise and expurgate his song.

"From another point of view *Leaves of Grass* is avowedly the song of Sex and Amativeness, and

even Animality—though meanings that do not usually go along with these words are behind all, and will duly emerge; and all are sought to be lifted into a different light and atmosphere. Of this feature, intentionally palpable in a few lines, I shall only say the espousing principle of those lines so gives breath to my whole scheme that the bulk of the pieces might as well have been left unwritten were those lines omitted. . . .

"Universal as are certain facts and symptoms of communities . . . there is nothing so rare in modern conventions and poetry as their normal recognizance. Literature is always calling in the doctor for consultation and confession, and always giving evasions and swathing suppressions in place of that "heroic nudity" on which only a genuine diagnosis . . . can be built. And in respect to editions of *Leaves of Grass* in time to come (if there should be such) I take occasion now to confirm those lines with the settled convictions and deliberate renewals of thirty years, and to hereby prohibit, as far as word of mine can do so, any elision of them."

But beyond all these notes and moods and motives is the lofty spirit of a grand and free

acceptance of all things that are worthy of existence. He desired, he says, "to formulate a poem whose every thought or fact should directly or indirectly be or connive at an implicit belief in the wisdom, health, mystery, beauty of every process, every concrete object, every human or other existence, not only consider'd from the point of view of all, but of each." His two final utterances are that "really great poetry is always . . the result of a national spirit, and not the privilege of a polish'd and select few"; and that "the strongest and sweetest songs yet remain to be sung."

Such are the views contained in the opening essay *A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads,* as he calls it; but there are many other essays in this fascinating volume, some on poets such as Burns and Lord Tennyson, for whom Walt Whitman has a profound admiration; some on old actors and singers, the elder Booth, Forrest, Alboni and Mario being his special favourites; others on the native Indians, on the Spanish element in American nationality, on Western slang, on the poetry of the Bible, and on Abraham Lincoln. But Walt Whitman is at his best when he is analysing his own work and making schemes

for the poetry of the future. Literature, to him, has a distinctly social aim. He seeks to build up the masses by "building up grand individuals." And yet literature itself must be preceded by noble forms of life. "The best literature is always the result of something far greater than itself—not the hero but the portrait of the hero. Before there can be recorded history or poem there must be the transaction." Certainly, in Walt Whitman's views there is a largeness of vision, a healthy sanity and a fine ethical purpose. He is not to be placed with the professional littérateurs of his country, Boston novelists, New York poets and the like. He stands apart, and the chief value of his work is in its prophecy, not in its performance. He has begun a prelude to larger themes. He is the herald to a new era. As a man he is the precursor of a fresh type. He is a factor in the heroic and spiritual evolution of the human being. If Poetry has passed him by, Philosophy will take note of him.

November Boughs. By Walt Whitman. (Alexander Gardner.)

MR. YEATS'S *WANDERINGS OF OISIN*.

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, July 12, 1889.)

Books of poetry by young writers are usually promissory notes that are never met. Now and then, however, one comes across a volume that is so far above the average that one can hardly resist the fascinating temptation of recklessly prophesying a fine future for its author. Such a book Mr. Yeats's *Wanderings of Oisin* certainly is. Here we find nobility of treatment and nobility of subject-matter, delicacy of poetic instinct and richness of imaginative resource. Unequal and uneven much of the work must be admitted to be. Mr. Yeats does not try to "out-baby" Wordsworth, we are glad to say; but he occasionally succeeds in "out-glittering" Keats, and, here and there, in his book we come across strange crudities and irritating conceits. But when he is at his best he is very good. If he has not the grand simplicity of epic treatment, he has at least something of the largeness of vision that belongs to the epical temper. He does not rob of their stature the great heroes of Celtic mythology. He is very naïve and very primitive and speaks of

his giants with the air of a child. Here is a characteristic passage from the account of Oisin's return from the Island of Forgetfulness:

"And I rode by the plains of the sea's edge, where all is barren and grey,
Grey sands on the green of the grasses and over the dripping trees,
Dripping and doubling landward, as though they would hasten away
Like an army of old men longing for rest from the moan of the seas.

"Long fled the foam-flakes around me, the winds fled out of the vast,
Snatching the bird in secret, nor knew I, embosomed apart,
When they froze the cloth on my body like armour riveted fast,
For Remembrance, lifting her leanness, keened in the gates of my heart.

"Till fattening the winds of the morning, an odour of new-mown hay
Came, and my forehead fell low, and my tears like berries fell down;

Later a sound came, half lost in the sound of a
shore far away,
From the great grass-barnacle calling, and later
the shore-winds brown.

"If I were as I once was, the gold hooves crushing
the sand and the shells,
Coming forth from the sea like the morning
with red lips murmuring a song,
Not coughing, my head on my knees, and praying,
and wroth with the bells,
I would leave no Saint's head on his body,
though spacious his lands were and strong.

"Making way from the kindling surges, I rode on
a bridle-path,
Much wondering to see upon all hands, of wattle
and wood-work made,
Thy bell-mounted churches, and guardless the
sacred cairn and the earth,
And a small and feeble populace stooping with
mattock and spade."

In one or two places the music is faulty, the construction is sometimes too involved, and the word "populace" in the last line is rather in-

felicitous; but, when all is said, it is impossible not to feel in these stanzas the presence of the true poetic spirit.

The Wanderings of Oisin and other Poems. By W. B. Yeats. (Kegan Paul.)

MR. WILLIAM MORRIS'S LAST BOOK.

(*Pall Mall Gazette,* March 2, 1889.)

Mr. Morris's last book is a piece of pure art workmanship from beginning to end, and the very remoteness of its style from the common language and ordinary interests of our day gives to the whole story a strange beauty and an unfamiliar charm. It is written in blended prose and verse, like the mediæval "cante-fable," and tells the tale of the House of the Wolfings in its struggles against the legionaries of Rome then advancing into Northern Germany. It is a kind of Saga, and the language in which the folk-epic, as we may call it, is set forth recalls the antique dignity and directness of our English tongue four centuries ago. From an artistic point of view it may be described as an attempt to return by a self-conscious effort to the conditions of an earlier and a fresher age. Attempts of this kind are

not uncommon in the history of art. From some such feeling came the pre-Raphaelite movement of our own day and the archaistic movemcnt of later Greek sculpture. When the result is beautiful the method is justified, and no shrill insistence upon a supposed necessity for absolute modernity of form can prevail against the value of work that has the incomparable excellence of style. Certainly, Mr. Morris's work possesses this excellence. His fine harmonies and rich cadences create in the reader that spirit by which alone can its own spirit be interpreted, awake in him something of the temper of romance and, by taking him out of his own age, place him in a truer and more vital relation to the great masterpieces of all time. It is a bad thing for an age to be always looking in art for its own reflection. It is well that, now and then, we are given work that is nobly imaginative in its method and purely artistic in its aim. As we read Mr. Morris's story with its fine alternations of verse and prose, its decorative and descriptive beauties, its wonderful handling of romantic and adventurous themes, we cannot but feel that we are as far removed from the ignoble fiction as we are from the ignoble facts of our own day. We breathe a

purer air, and have dreams of a time when life had a kind of poetical quality of its own, and was simple and stately and complete.

The tragic interest of *The House of the Wolfings* centres round the figure of Thiodolf, the great hero of the tribe. The goddess who loves him gives him, as he goes to battle against the Romans, a magical hauberk on which rests this strange fate: that he who wears it shall save his own life and destroy the life of his land. Thiodolf, finding out this secret, brings the hauberk back to the Wood-Sun, as she is called, and chooses death for himself rather than the ruin of his cause, and so the story ends.

But Mr. Morris has always preferred romance to tragedy, and set the development of action above the concentration of passion. His story is like some splendid old tapestry crowded with stately images and enriched with delicate and delightful detail. The impression it leaves on us is not of a single central figure dominating the whole, but rather of a magnificent design to which everything is subordinated, and by which everything becomes of enduring import. It is the whole presentation of the primitive life that really fascinates. What in other hands would

have been mere archæology is here transformed by quick artistic instinct and made wonderful for us, and human and full of high interest. The ancient world seems to have come to life again for our pleasure.

Of a work so large and so coherent, completed with no less perfection than it is conceived, it is difficult by mere quotation to give any adequate idea. This, however, may serve as an example of its narrative power. The passage describes the visit of Thiodolf to the Wood-Sun:

"The moonlight lay in a great flood on the grass without, and the dew was falling in the coldest hour of the night, and the earth smelled sweetly: the whole habitation was asleep now, and there was no sound to be known as the sound of any creature, save that from the distant meadow came the lowing of a cow that had lost her calf, and that a white owl was flitting about near the eaves of the Roof with her wild cry that sounded like the mocking of merriment now silent. Thiodolf turned toward the wood, and walked steadily through the scattered hazel-trees, and thereby into the thick of the beech-trees, whose boles grew smooth and silver-grey, high and close-set: and so on and on he went as one going by a well-known path,

though there was no path, till all the moonlight was quenched under the close roof of the beech-leaves, though yet for all the darkness, no man could go there and not feel that the roof was green above him. Still he went on in despite of the darkness, till at last there was a glimmer before him, that grew greater till he came unto a small wood-lawn whereon the turf grew again, though the grass was but thin, because little sunlight got to it, so close and thick were the tall trees round about it . . . Nought looked Thiodolf either at the heavens above, or the trees, as he strode from off the husk-strewn floor of the beech wood on to the scanty grass of the lawn, but his eyes looked straight before him at that which was amidmost of the lawn: and little wonder was that; for there on a stone chair sat a woman exceeding fair, clad in glittering raiment, her hair lying as pale in the moonlight on the grey stone as the barley acres in the August night before the reaping-hook goes in amongst them. She sat there as though she were awaiting some one, and he made no stop nor stay, but went straight up to her, and took her in his arms, and kissed her mouth and her eyes, and she him again; and then he sat himself down beside her."

As an example of the beauty of the verse we would take this from the song of the Wood-Sun. It at least shows how perfectly the poetry harmonizes with the prose, and how natural the transition is from the one to the other:

"In many a stead Doom dwelleth, nor sleepeth day nor night:
The rim of the bowl she kisseth, and bareth the chambering light
When the kings of men wend happy to the bride-bed from the board.
It is little to say that she wendeth the edge of the grinded sword,
When about the house half builded she hangeth many a day;
The ship from the strand she shoveth, and on his wonted way
By the mountain hunter fareth where his foot ne'er failed before:
She is where the high bank crumbles at last on the river's shore.

"The mower's scythe she whetteth; and lulleth the shepherd to sleep
Where the deadly ling-worm wakeneth in the desert of the sheep.

Now we that come of the God-kin of her redes for
ourselves we wot,
But her will with the lives of men-folk and their
ending know we not.
So therefore I bid thee not fear for thyself of
Doom and her deed.
But for me: and I bid thee hearken to the helping
of my need.
Or else—Art thou happy in life, or lusteth thou to
die
In the flower of thy days, when thy glory and thy
longing bloom on high?"

The last chapter of the book in which we are told of the great feast made for the dead is so finely written that we cannot refrain from quoting this passage:

"Now was the glooming falling upon the earth; but the Hall was bright within even as the Hall-Sun had promised. Therein was set for the Treasure of the Wolfings; fair cloths were hung on the walls, goodly broidered garments on the pillars: goodly brazen cauldrons and fair-carven chests were set down in nooks where men could see them well, and vessels of gold and silver were

set all up and down the tables of the feast. The pillars also were wreathed with flowers, and flowers hung garlanded from the walls over the precious hangings; sweet gums and spices were burning in fair-wrought censers of brass, and so many candles were alight under the Roof, that scarce had it looked more ablaze when the Romans had litten the faggots therein for its burning amidst the hurry of the Morning Battle.

"There then they fell to feasting, hallowing in the hightide of their return with victory in their hands: and the dead corpses of Thiodolf and Otter, clad in precious glittering raiment, looked down on them from the Highseat, and the kindreds worshipped them and were glad; and they drank the Cup to them before any others, were they Gods or men."

In days of uncouth realism and unimaginative imitation, it is a high pleasure to welcome work of this kind. It is a work in which all lovers of literature cannot fail to delight.

A Tale of the House of the Wolfings and all the Kindreds of the Mark. Written in Prose and in Verse by William Morris. (Reeves and Turner.)

MR. SWINBURNE'S *POEMS AND BALLADS* (THIRD SERIES).

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, June 27, 1889.)

Mr. Swinburne once set his age on fire by a volume of very perfect and very poisonous poetry. Then he became revolutionary and pantheistic, and cried out against those that sit in high places both in heaven and on earth. Then he invented Marie Stuart and laid upon us the heavy burden of *Bothwell*. Then he retired to the nursery and wrote poems about children of a somewhat over-subtle character. He is now extremely patriotic, and manages to combine with his patriotism a strong affection for the Tory party. He has always been a great poet. But he has his limitations, the chief of which is, curiously enough, the entire lack of any sense of limit. His song is nearly always too loud for his subject. His magnificent rhetoric, nowhere more magnificent than in the volume that now lies before us, conceals rather than reveals. It has been said of him, and with truth, that he is a master of language, but with still greater truth it may be said that Language is his master. Words seem to dominate

him. Alliteration tyrannizes over him. Mere sound often becomes his lord. He is so eloquent that whatever he touches becomes unreal.

Let us turn to the poem on the Armada:

"The wings of the south-west wind are widened; the breath of his fervent lips,
More keen than a sword's edge, fiercer than fire, falls full on the plunging ships.
The pilot is he of the northward flight, their stay and their steersman he;
A helmsman clothed with the tempest, and girdled with strength to constrain the sea.
And the host of them trembles and quails, caught fast in his hand as a bird in the toils:
For the wrath and the joy that fulfil him are mightier than man's, whom he slays and spoils.
And vainly, with heart divided in sunder, and labour of wavering will,
The lord of their host takes counsel with hope if haply their star shine still."

Somehow we seem to have heard all this before. Does it come from the fact that of all the poets who ever lived Mr. Swinburne is the one who is the most limited in imagery? It must be ad-

mitted that he is so. He has wearied us with his monotony. "Fire" and the "Sea" are two words ever on his lips. We must confess also that this shrill singing—marvellous as it is—leaves us out of breath. Here is a passage from a poem called *A Word with the Wind*:

"Be the sunshine bared or veiled, the sky superb or shrouded,
Still the waters, lax and languid, chafed and foiled,
Keen and thwarted, pale and patient, clothed with fire or clouded,
Vex their heart in vain, or sleep like serpents coiled.
Thee they look for, blind and baffled, wan with wrath and weary,
Blown for ever back by winds that rock the bird:
Winds that seamews breast subdue the sea, and bid the dreary
Waves be weak as hearts made sick with hope deferred.
Let the clarion sound from westward, let the south bear token
How the glories of thy godhead sound and shine:

Bid the land rejoice to see the land-wind's broad
wings broken,
Bid the sea take comfort, bid the world be
thine."

Verse of this kind may be justly praised for the sustained strength and vigour of its metrical scheme. Its purely technical excellence is extraordinary. But is it more than an oratorical *tour de force?* Does it really convey much? Does it charm? Could we return to it again and again with renewed pleasure? We think not. It seems to us empty.

Of course, we must not look to these poems for any revelation of human life. To be at one with the elements seems to be Mr. Swinburne's aim. He seeks to speak with the breath of wind and wave. The roar of the fire is ever in his ears. He puts his clarion to the lips of Spring and bids her blow, and the Earth wakes from her dreams and tells him her secret. He is the first lyric poet who has tried to make an absolute surrender of his own personality, and he has succeeded. We hear the song, but we never know the singer. We never even get near to him. Out of the thunder and splendour of words he himself says nothing. We have often had

man's interpretation of Nature; now we have Nature's interpretation of man, and she has curiously little to say. Force and Freedom form her vague message. She deafens us with her clangours.

But Mr. Swinburne is not always riding the whirlwind and calling out of the depths of the sea. Romantic ballads in Border dialect have not lost their fascination for him, and this last volume contains some very splendid examples of his curious artificial kind of poetry. The amount of pleasure one gets out of dialect is a matter entirely of temperament. To say "mither" instead of "mother" seems to many the acme of romance. There are others who are not quite so ready to believe in the pathos of provincialism. There is, however, no doubt of Mr. Swinburne's mastery over the form, whether the form be quite legitimate or not. *The Weary Wedding* has the concentration and colour of a great drama, and the quaintness of its style lends it something of the power of a grotesque. The ballad of *The Witch-Mother,* a mediæval Medea who slays her children because her lord is faithless, is worth reading on account of its horrible simplicity. *The Bride's Tragedy,* with its refrain of

"In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin:"

The *Jacobite's Exile*—

"O lordly flow the Loire and Seine,
And loud the dark Durance:
But bonnier shine the braes of Tyne
Than a' the fields of France;
And the waves of Till that speak sae still
Gleam goodlier where they glance:"

The Tyneside Widow and *A Reiver's Neck-verse* are all poems of fine imaginative power, and some of them are terrible in their fierce intensity of passion. There is no danger of English poetry narrowing itself to a form so limited as the romantic ballad in dialect. It is of too vital a growth for that. So we may welcome Mr. Swinburne's masterly experiments with the hope that things which are inimitable will not be imitated. The collection is completed by a few poems on children, some sonnets, a threnody on John William Inchbold, and a lovely lyric entitled *The Interpreters*.

"In human thought have all things habitation;
Our days
Laugh, lower, and lighten past and find no station
That stays.

But thought and faith are mightier things than time
Can wrong,
Made splendid once by speech, or made sublime
By song.

Remembrance, though the tide of change that rolls
Wax hoary,
Gives earth and heaven, for song's sake and the souls,
Their glory."

Certainly, "for song's sake" we should love Mr. Swinburne's work, cannot, indeed, help loving it, so marvellous a music-maker is he. But what of the soul? For the soul we must go elsewhere.

Poems and Ballads. Third Series. By Algernon Charles Swinburne. (Chatto and Windus.)

A CHINESE SAGE

(*Speaker,* February 8, 1890.)

An eminent Oxford theologian once remarked that his only objection to modern progress was

that it progressed forward instead of backward —a view that so fascinated a certain artistic undergraduate that he promptly wrote an essay upon some unnoticed analogies between the development of ideas and the movements of the common sea-crab. I feel sure the *Speaker* will not be suspected even by its most enthusiastic friends of holding this dangerous heresy of retrogression. But I must candidly admit that I have come to the conclusion that the most caustic criticism of modern life I have met with for some time is that contained in the writings of the learned Chuang Tzŭ, recently translated into the vulgar tongue by Mr. Herbert Giles, Her Majesty's Consul at Tamsui.

The spread of popular education has no doubt made the name of this great thinker quite familiar to the general public, but, for the sake of the few and the over-cultured, I feel it my duty to state definitely who he was, and to give a brief outline of the character of his philosophy.

Chuang Tzŭ, whose name must carefully be pronounced as it is not written, was born in the fourth century before Christ, by the banks of the Yellow River, in the Flowery Land; and portraits of the wonderful sage seated on the flying dragon of contemplation may still be found on the simple

tea-trays and pleasing screens of many of our most respectable suburban households. The honest ratepayer and his healthy family have no doubt often mocked at the dome-like forehead of the philosopher, and laughed over the strange perspective of the landscape that lies beneath him. If they really knew who he was, they would tremble. Chuang Tzŭ spent his life in preaching the great creed of Inaction, and in pointing out the uselessness of all useful things. "Do nothing, and everything will be done," was the doctrine which he inherited from his great master Lao Tzŭ. To resolve action into thought, and thought into abstraction, was his wicked transcendental aim. Like the obscure philosopher of early Greek speculation, he believed in the identity of contraries; like Plato, he was an idealist, and had all the idealist's contempt for utilitarian systems; he was a mystic like Dionysius, and Scotus Erigena, and Jacob Böhme, and held, with them and with Philo, that the object of life was to get rid of self-consciousness, and to become the unconscious vehicle of a higher illumination. In fact, Chuang Tzŭ may be said to have summed up in himself almost every mood of European metaphysical or mystical thought, from Heraclitus down to Hegel.

There was something in him of the Quietist also; and in his worship of Nothing he may be said to have in some measure anticipated those strange dreamers of mediæval days who, like Tauler and Master Eckhart, adored the *purum nihil* and the Abyss. The great middle classes of this country, to whom, as we all know, our prosperity, if not our civilization, is entirely due, may shrug their shoulders over all this and ask, with a certain amount of reason, what is the identity of contraries to them, and why they should get rid of that self-consciousness which is their chief characteristic. But Chuang Tzŭ was something more than a metaphysician and an illuminist. He sought to destroy society, as we know it, as the middle classes know it; and the sad thing is that he combines with the passionate eloquence of a Rousseau the scientific reasoning of a Herbert Spencer. There is nothing of the sentimentalist in him. He pities the rich more than the poor, if he ever pities at all, and prosperity seems to to him as tragic a thing as suffering. He has nothing of the modern sympathy with failures, nor does he propose that the prizes should always be given on moral grounds to those who come in last in the race. It is the race itself that he objects

to, and as for active sympathy, which has become the profession of so many worthy people in our own day, he thinks that trying to make others good is as silly an occupation as "beating a drum in a forest in order to find a fugitive." It is a mere waste of energy. That is all. While, as for a thoroughly sympathetic man, he is, in the eyes of Chuang Tzŭ, simply a man who is always trying to be somebody else, and so misses the only possible excuse for his own existence.

Yes; incredible as it may seem, this curious thinker looked back with a sigh of regret to a certain Golden Age when there were no competitive examinations, no wearisome educational systems, no missionaries, no penny dinners for the people, no Established Churches, no Humanitarian Societies, no dull lectures about one's duty to one's neighbour, and no tedious sermons about any subject at all. In those ideal days, he tells us, people loved each other without being conscious of charity, or writing to the newspapers about it. They were upright, and yet they never published books upon Altruism. As every man kept his knowledge to himself, the world escaped the curse of scepticism; and as every man kept his virtues to himself, no one meddled in other people's business. They lived

simple and peaceful lives, and were contented with such food and raiment as they could get. Neighbouring districts were in sight, and "the cocks and the dogs of one could be heard in the other," yet the people grew old and died without ever interchanging visits. There was no chattering about clever men, and no laudation of good men. The intolerable sense of obligation was unknown. The deeds of humanity left no trace, and their affairs were not made a burden for posterity by foolish historians.

In an evil moment the Philanthropist made his appearance, and brought with him the mischievous idea of Government. "There is such a thing," says Chuang Tzŭ, "as leaving mankind alone: there has never been such a thing as governing mankind," All modes of government are wrong. They are unscientific, because they seek to alter the natural environment of man; they are immoral because, by interfering with the individual, they produce the most progressive forms of egotism; they are ignorant, because they try to spread education; they are self destructive, because they engender anarchy. "Of old," he tells us, "the Yellow Emperor first caused charity and duty to one's neighbour to interfere with the natural

goodness of the heart of man. In consequence of this, Yao and Shun wore the hair off their legs in endeavouring to feed their people. They disturbed their internal economy in order to find room for artificial virtues. They exhausted their energies in framing laws, and they were failures." Man's heart, our philosopher goes on to say, may be "forced down or stirred up," and in either case the issue is fatal. Yao made the people too happy, so they were not satisfied. Chieh made them too wretched, so they grew discontented. Then every one began to argue about the best way of tinkering up society. "It is quite clear that something must be done," they said to each other, and there was a general rush for knowledge. The results were so dreadful that the Government of the day had to bring in Coercion, and as a consequence of this "virtuous men sought refuge in mountain caves, while rulers of state sat trembling in ancestral halls." Then, when everything was in a state of perfect chaos, the Social Reformers got up on platforms, and preached salvation from the ills that they and their system had caused. The poor Social Reformers! "They know not shame, nor what it is to blush," is the verdict of Chuang Tzŭ upon them.

The economic question, also, is discussed by this almond-eyed sage at great length, and he writes about the curse of capital as eloquently as Mr. Hyndman. The accumulation of wealth is to him the origin of evil. It makes the strong violent, and the weak dishonest. It creates the petty thief, and puts him in a bamboo cage. It creates the big thief, and sets him on a throne of white jade. It is the father of competition, and competition is the waste, as well as the destruction, of energy. The order of nature is rest, repetition and peace. Weariness and war are the results of an artificial society based upon capital; and the richer society gets, the more thoroughly bankrupt it really is, for it has neither sufficient rewards for the good nor sufficient punishments for the wicked. There is also this to be remembered—that the prizes of the world degrade a man as much as punishments. The age is rotten with its worship of success. As for education, true wisdom can neither be learnt nor taught. It is a spiritual state, to which he who lives in harmony with nature attains. Knowledge is shallow if we compare it with the extent of the unknown, and only the unknowable is a value. Society produces rogues, and education makes one rogue cleverer than another. This is the only

result of School Boards. Besides, of what possible philosophic importance can education be, when it serves simply to make each man differ from his neighbour? We arrive ultimately at a chaos of opinions, doubt everything, and fall into the vulgar habit of arguing; and it is only the intellectually lost who ever argue. Look at Hui Tzu. "He was a man of many ideas. His work would fill five carts. But his doctrines were paradoxical." He said that there were feathers in an egg, because there were feathers on a chicken; that a dog could be a sheep, because all names were arbitrary; that there was a moment when a swift-flying arrow was neither moving nor at rest; that if you took a stick a foot long, and cut it in half every day, you would never come to the end of it; and that a bay horse and a dun cow were three, because taken separately they were two, and taken together they were one, and one and two made up three. "He was like a man running a race with his own shadow, and making a noise in order to drown the echo. He was a clever gadfly, that was all. What was the use of him?"

Morality is, of course, a different thing. It went out of fashion, says Chuang Tzŭ, when people began to moralize. Men ceased then to be spontan-

eous and to act on intuition. They became priggish and artificial, and were so blind as to have a definite purpose in life. Then came Governments and Philanthropists, those two pests of the age. The former tried to coerce people into being good, and so destroyed the natural goodness of man. The latter were a set of aggressive busybodies who caused confusion wherever they went. They were stupid enough to have principles, and unfortunate enough to act up to them. They all came to bad ends, and showed that universal altruism is as bad in its results as universal egotism. "They tripped people up over charity, and fettered them with duties to their neighbors." They gushed over music, and fussed over ceremonies. As a consequence of all this, the world lost its equilibrium, and has been staggering ever since.

Who, then, according to Chuang Tzŭ, is the perfect man? And what is his manner of life? The perfect man does nothing beyond gazing at the universe. He adopts no absolute position. "In motion, he is like water. At rest, he is like a mirror. And, like Echo, he answers only when he is called upon." He lets externals take care of themselves. Nothing material injures him; noth-

ing spiritual punishes him. His mental equilibrium gives him the empire of the world. He is never the slave of objective existences. He knows that, "just as the best language is that which is never spoken, so the best action is that which is never done." He is passive, and accepts the laws of life. He rests in inactivity, and sees the world become virtuous of itself. He does not try to "bring about his own good deeds." He never wastes himself on effort. He is not troubled about moral distinctions. He knows that things are what they are, and that their consequences will be what they will be. His mind is the "speculum of creation," and he is ever at peace.

All this is of course excessively dangerous, but we must remember that Chuang Tzŭ lived more than two thousand years ago, and never had the opportunity of seeing our unrivalled civilization. And yet it is possible that, were he to come back to earth and visit us, he might have something to say to Mr. Balfour about his coercion and active misgovernment in Ireland; he might smile at some of our philanthropic ardours, and shake his head over many of our organized charities; the School Board might not impress him, nor our race for wealth stir his admiration; he might wonder

at our ideals, and grow sad over what we have realized. Perhaps it is well that Chaung Tzŭ cannot return.

Meanwhile, thanks to Mr. Giles and Mr. Quaritch, we have his book to console us, and certainly it is a most fascinating and delightful volume. Chuang Tzŭ is one of the Darwinians before Darwin. He traces man from the germ, and sees his unity with nature. As an anthropologist he is exceedingly interesting, and he describes our primitive arboreal ancestor living in trees through his terror of animals stronger than himself, and knowing only one parent, the mother, with all the accuracy of a lecturer at the Royal Society. Like Plato, he adopts the dialogue as his mode of expression, "putting words into other people's mouths," he tells us, "in order to gain breadth of view." As a story-teller he is charming. The account of the visit of the respectable Confucius to the great Robber Chê is most vivid and brilliant, and it is impossible not to laugh over the ultimate discomfiture of the sage, the barrenness of whose moral platitudes is ruthlessly exposed by the successful brigand. Even in his metaphysics, Chuang Tzŭ is intensely humorous. He personifies his abstractions, and makes them act plays before us.

The Spirit of the Clouds, when passing eastward through the expanse of air, happened to fall in with the Vital Principle. The latter was slapping his ribs and hopping about: whereupon the Spirit of the Clouds said, "Who are you, old man, and what are you doing?" "Strolling!" replied the Vital Principle, without stopping, for all activities are ceaseless. "I want to *know* something," continued the Spirit of the Clouds. "Ah!" cried the Vital Principle, in a tone of disapprobation, and a marvellous conversation follows, that is not unlike the dialogue between the Sphinx and the Chimera in Flaubert's curious drama. Talking animals, also, have their places in Chuang Tzŭ's parables and stories, and through myth and poetry and fancy his strange philosophy finds musical utterance.

Of course it is sad to be told that it is immoral to be consciously good, and that doing anything is the worst form of idleness. Thousands of excellent and really earnest philanthropists would be absolutely thrown upon the rates if we adopted the view that nobody should be allowed to meddle in what does not concern him. The doctrine of the uselessness of all useful things would not merely endanger our commercial supremacy as a nation,

but might bring discredit upon many prosperous and serious minded members of the shop-keeping classes. What would become of our popular preachers, our Exeter Hall orators, our drawing-room evangelists, if we said to them, in the words of Chuang Tzŭ, "Mosquitoes will keep a man awake all night with their biting, and just in the same way this talk of charity and duty to one's neighbour drives us nearly crazy. Sirs, strive to keep the world to its own original simplicity, and, as the wind bloweth where it listeth, so let Virtue establish itself. Wherefore this undue energy?" And what would be the fate of governments and professional politicians if we came to the conclusion that there is no such thing as governing mankind at all? It is clear that Chuang Tzŭ is a very dangerous writer, and the publication of his book in English, two thousand years after his death, is obviously premature, and may cause a great deal of pain to many thoroughly respectable and industrious persons. It may be true that the ideal of self-culture and self-development, which is the aim of his scheme of life, and the basis of his scheme of philosophy, is an ideal somewhat needed by an age like ours, in which most people are so anxious to educate their neighbours that they have

actually no time left in which to educate themselves. But would it be wise to say so? It seems to me that if we once admitted the force of any one of Chuang Tžŭ's destructive criticisms we should have to put some check on our national habit of self-glorification; and the only thing that ever consoles man for the stupid things he does is the praise he always gives himself for doing them. There may, however, be a few who have grown wearied of that strange modern tendency that sets enthusiasm to do the work of the intellect. To these, and such as these, Chuang Tzŭ will be welcome. But let them only read him. Let them not talk about him. He would be disturbing at dinner-parties, and impossible at afternoon teas, and his whole life was a protest against platform speaking. "The perfect man ignores self; the divine man ignores action; the true sage ignores reputation." These are the principles of Chuang Tzŭ.

Chuang Tzŭ: Mystic, Moralist, and Social Reformer. Translated from the Chinese by Herbert A. Giles, H. B. M.'s Consul at Tamsui. (Bernard Quaritch.)

MR. PATER'S *APPRECIATIONS.*

(*Speaker,* March 22, 1890.)

When I first had the privilege—and I count it a very high one—of meeting Mr. Walter Pater, he said to me, smiling, "Why do you always write poetry? Why do you not write prose? Prose is so much more difficult."

It was during my undergraduate days at Oxford; days of lyrical ardour and of studious sonnet-writing; days when one loved the exquisite intricacy and musical repetitions of the ballade, and the villanelle with its linked long-drawn echoes and its curious completeness; days when one solemnly sought to discover the proper temper in which a triolet should be written; delightful days, in which, I am glad to say, there was far more rhyme than reason.

I may frankly confess now that at the time I did not quite comprehend what Mr. Pater really meant; and it was not till I had carefully studied his beautiful and suggestive essays on the Renaissance that I fully realized what a wonderful self-conscious art the art of English prose-writing really is, or may be made to be. Carlyle's stormy

rhetoric, Ruskin's winged and passionate eloquence, had seemed to me to spring from enthusiasm rather than from art. I do not think I knew then that even prophets correct their proofs. As for Jacobean prose, I thought it too exuberant; and Queen Anne prose appeared to me terribly bald, and irritatingly rational. But Mr. Pater's essays became to me "the golden book of spirit and sense, the holy writ of beauty." They are still this to me. It is possible, of course, that I may exaggerate about them. I certainly hope that I do; for where there is no exaggeration there is no love, and where there is no love there is no understanding. It is only about things that do not interest one, that one can give a really unbiassed opinion; and this is no doubt the reason why an unbiassed opinion is always valueless.

But I must not allow this brief notice of Mr. Pater's new volume to degenerate into an autobiography. I remember being told in America that whenever Margaret Fuller wrote an essay upon Emerson the printers had always to send out to borrow some additional capital "I's," and I feel it right to accept this transatlantic warning.

Appreciations, in the fine Latin sense of the word, is the title given by Mr. Pater to his book,

which is an exquisite collection of exquisite essays, of delicately wrought works of art—some of them being almost Greek in their purity of outline and perfection of form, others mediæval in their strangeness of colour and passionate suggestion, and all of them absolutely modern, in the true meaning of the term modernity. For he to whom the present is the only thing that is present, knows nothing of the age in which he lives. To realize the nineteenth century one must realize every century that has preceded it, and that has contributed to its making. To know anything about oneself, one must know all about others. There must be no mood with which one cannot sympathize, no dead mode of life that one cannot make alive. The legacies of heredity may make us alter our views of moral responsibility, but they cannot but intensify our sense of the value of Criticism; for the true critic is he who bears within himself the dreams and ideas and feelings of myriad generations, and to whom no form of thought is alien, no emotional impulse obscure.

Perhaps the most interesting, and certainly the least successful, of the essays contained in the present volume is that on *Style*. It is the most interesting because it is the work of one who speaks

with the high authority that comes from the noble realization of things nobly conceived. It is the least successful, because the subject is too abstract. A true artist like Mr. Pater is more felicitous when he deals with the concrete, whose very limitations give him finer freedom, while they necessitate more intense vision. And yet what a high ideal is contained in these few pages! How good it is for us, in these days of popular education and facile journalism, to be reminded of the real scholarship that is essential to the perfect writer, who, "being a true lover of words for their own sake, a minute and constant observer of their physiognomy," will avoid what is mere rhetoric, or ostentatious ornament, or negligent misuse of terms, or ineffective surplusage, and will be known by his tact of omission, by his skilful economy of means, by his selection and self-restraint, and perhaps above all by that conscious artistic structure which is the expression of mind in style. I think I have been wrong in saying that the subject is too abstract. In Mr. Pater's hands it becomes very real to us indeed, and he shows us how, behind the perfection of a man's style, must lie the passion of a man's soul.

As one passes to the rest of the volume, one finds

essays on Wordsworth and on Coleridge, on Charles Lamb and on Sir Thomas Browne, on some of Shakespeare's plays and on the English kings that Shakespeare fashioned, on Dante Rossetti, and on William Morris. As that on Wordsworth seems to be Mr. Pater's last work, so that on the singer of the *Defense of Guenevere* is certainly his earliest, or almost his earliest, and it is interesting to mark the change that has taken place in his style. This change is, perhaps, at first sight not very apparent. In 1868 we find Mr. Pater writing with the same exquisite care for words, with the same studied music, with the same temper, and something of the same mode of treatment. But, as he goes on, the architecture of the style becomes richer and more complex, the epithet more precise and intellectual. Occasionally one may be inclined to think that there is, here and there, a sentence which is somewhat long, and possibly, if one may venture to say so, a little heavy and cumbersome in movement. But if this be so, it comes from those side-issues suddenly suggested by the idea in its progress, and really revealing the idea more perfectly; or from those felicitous after-thoughts that give a fuller completeness to the central scheme, and yet convey something of the charm of chance;

or from a desire to suggest the secondary shades of meaning with all their accumulating effect, and to avoid, it may be, the violence and harshness of too definite and exclusive an opinion. For in matters of art, at any rate, thought is inevitably coloured by emotion, and so is fluid rather than fixed, and, recognizing its dependence upon the moods and upon the passion of fine moments, will not accept the rigidity of a scientific formula or a theological dogma. The critical pleasure, too, that we receive from tracing, through what may seem the intricacies of a sentence, the working of the constructive intelligence, must not be overlooked. As soon as we have realized the design, everything appears clear and simple. After a time, these long sentences of Mr. Pater's come to have a charm of an elaborate piece of music, and the unity of such music also.

I have suggested that the essay on Wordsworth is probably the most recent bit of work contained in this volume. If one might choose between so much that is good, I should be inclined to say it is the finest also. The essay on Lamb is curiously suggestive; suggestive, indeed, of a somewhat more tragic, more sombre figure, than men have been wont to think of in connection with the

author of the *Essays of Elia.* It is an interesting aspect under which to regard Lamb, but perhaps he himself would have had some difficulty in recognizing the portrait given to him. He had, undoubtedly, great sorrows, or motives for sorrows, but he could console himself at a moment's notice for the real tragedies of life by reading any one of the Elizabethan tragedies, provided it was in a folio edition. The essay on Sir Thomas Browne is delightful, and has the strange, personal, fanciful charm of the author of the *Religio Medici,* Mr. Pater often catching the colour and accent and tone of whatever artist, or work of art, he deals with. That on Coleridge, with its insistence on the necessity of the cultivation of the relative, as opposed to the absolute spirit in philosophy and in ethics, and its high appreciation of the poet's true position in our literature, is in style and substance a very blameless work. Grace of expression and delicate subtlety of thought and phrase, characterize the essays on Shakespeare. But the essay on Wordsworth has a spiritual beauty of its own. It appeals, not to the ordinary Wordsworthian with his uncritical temper, and his gross confusion of ethical and æsthetical problems, but rather to those who desire to separate the gold from the dross, and to

reach at the true Wordsworth through the mass of tedious and prosaic work that bears his name, and that serves often to conceal him from us. The presence of an alien element in Wordsworth's art is, of course, recognized by Mr. Pater, but he touches on it merely from the psychological point of view, pointing out how this quality of higher and lower moods gives the effect in his poetry "of a power not altogether his own, or under his control"; a power which comes and goes when it wills, "so that the old fancy which made the poet's art an enthusiasm, a form of divine possession, seems almost true of him." Mr. Pater's earlier essays had their *purpurei panni,* so eminently suitable for quotation, such as the famous passage on *Mona Lisa,* and that other in which Botticelli's strange conception of the Virgin is so strangely set forth. From the present volume it is difficult to select any one passage in preference to another as specially characteristic of Mr. Pater's treatment. This, however, is worth quoting at length. It contains a truth eminently suitable for our age:

"That the end of life is not action but contemplation—*being* as distinct from *doing*—a certain disposition of the mind: is, in some shape or other,

the principle of all the higher morality. In poetry, in art, if you enter into their true spirit at all, you touch this principle in a measure; these, by their sterility, are a type of beholding for the mere joy of beholding. To treat life in the spirit of art is to make life a thing in which means and ends are identified: to encourage such treatment, the true moral significance of art and poetry. Wordsworth, and other poets who have been like him in ancient or more recent times, are the masters, the experts, in this art of impassioned contemplation. Their work is not to teach lessons, or enforce rules, or even to stimulate us to noble ends, but to withdraw the thoughts for a while from the mere machinery of life, to fix them, with appropriate emotions, on the spectacle of those great facts in man's existence which no machinery affects, 'on the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature'—on 'the operations of the elements and the appearances of the visible universe, on storm and sunshine, on the revolutions of the seasons, on cold and heat, on loss of friends and kindred, on injuries and resentments, on gratitude and hope, on fear and sorrow.' To witness this spectacle with appropriate emotions is

the aim of all culture; and of these emotions poetry like Wordsworth's is a great nourisher and stimulant. He sees nature full of sentiment and excitement; he sees men and women as parts of nature, passionate, excited, in strange grouping and connection with the grandeur and beauty of the natural world:—images, in his own words, 'of men suffering, amid awful forms and powers.'"

Certainly the real secret of Wordsworth has never been better expressed. After having read and re-read Mr. Pater's essay—for it requires re-reading—one returns to the poet's work with a new sense of joy and wonder, and with something of eager and impassioned expectation. And perhaps this might be roughly taken as the test or touchstone of the finest criticism.

Finally, one cannot help noticing the delicate instinct that has gone to fashion the brief epilogue that ends this delightful volume. The difference between the classical and romantic spirits in art has often, and with much over-emphasis, been discussed. But with what a light sure touch does Mr. Pater write of it! How subtle and certain are his distinctions! If imaginative prose be really the special art of this century, Mr. Pater

must rank amongst our century's most characteristic artists. In certain things he stands almost alone. The age has produced wonderful prose styles, turbid with individualism, and violent with excess of rhetoric. But in Mr. Pater, as in Cardinal Newman, we find the union of personality with perfection. He has no rival in his own sphere, and he has escaped disciples. And this, not because he has not been imitated, but because in art so fine as his there is something that, in its essence, is inimitable.

Appreciations, with an Essay on Style. By Walter Pater, Fellow of Brasenose College. (Macmillan and Co.)

Rose-Leaf and Apple-Leaf

L'Envoi

The following is a reprint of Mr. Oscar Wilde's Introduction (L'Envoi) to "Rose-leaf and Apple-leaf," a book of poems by Mr. Rennell Rodd, published in Philadelphia, U. S. A., in A.D. 1882.

ROSE-LEAF AND APPLE-LEAF.

L'Envoi.

Amongst the many young men in England who are seeking along with me to continue and to perfect the English Renaissance—*Jeunes guerriers du drapeau romantique,* as Gautier would have called us—there is none whose love of art is more flawless and fervent, whose artistic sense of beauty is more subtle and more delicate—none, indeed, who is dearer to myself—than the young poet whose verses I have brought with me to America; verses full of sweet sadness, and yet full of joy; for the most joyous poet is not he who sows the desolate highways of this world with the barren seed of laughter, but he who makes his sorrow most musical, this indeed being the meaning of joy in art—that incommunicable element of artistic delight which, in poetry, for instance, comes from what Keats called

the "sensuous life of verse," the element of song in the singing, made so pleasurable to us by that wonder of motion which often has its origin in mere musical impulse, and in painting is to be sought for, from the subject never, but from the pictorial charm only—the scheme and symphony of the colour, the satisfying beauty of the design: so that the ultimate expression of our artistic movement in painting has been, not in the spiritual visions of the pre-Raphaelites, for all their marvel of Greek legend and their mystery of Italian song, but in the work of such men as Whistler and Albert Moore, who have raised design and colour to the ideal level of poetry and music. For the quality of their exquisite painting comes from the mere inventive and creative handling of line and colour, from a certain form and choice of beautiful workmanship, which, rejecting all literary reminiscence and all metaphysical idea, is in itself entirely satisfying to the æsthetic sense—is, as the Greeks would say, an end in itself; the effect of their work being like the effect given to us by music; for music is the art in which form and matter are always one—the art whose subject cannot be separated from the method of its expression; the art which most completely realises for us the artistic

ideal, and is the condition to which all the other arts are constantly aspiring.

Now this increased sense of the absolutely satisfying value of beautiful workmanship, this recognition of the primary importance of the sensuous element in art, this love of art for art's sake, is the point in which we of the younger school have made a departure from the teaching of Mr. Ruskin—a departure definite and different and decisive.

Master indeed of the knowledge of all noble living and of the wisdom of all spiritual things will he be to us ever, seeing that it was he who, by the magic of his presence and the music of his lips, taught us at Oxford that enthusiasm for beauty which is the secret of Hellenism, and that desire for creation which is the secret of life, and filled some of us, at least, with the lofty and passionate ambition to go forth into far and fair lands with some message for the nations and some mission for the world, and yet in his art criticism, his estimate of the joyous element of art, his whole method of approaching art, we are no longer with him; for the keystone to his æsthetic system is ethical always. He would judge of a picture by the amount of noble moral ideas it expresses, but to us

the channels by which all noble work in painting can touch, and does touch, the soul are not those of truths of life or metaphysical truths. To him perfection of workmanship seems but the symbol of pride, and incompleteness of technical resource the image of an imagination too limitless to find within the limits of form its complete expression, or of a love too simple not to stammer in its tale. But to us the rule of art is not the rule of morals. In an ethical system, indeed, of any gentle mercy good intentions will, one is fain to fancy, have their recognition; but of those that would enter the serene House of Beauty the question that we ask is not what they had ever meant to do, but what they have done. Their pathetic intentions are of no value to us, but their realised creations only. *Pour moi je prefere les poétes qui fonts des vers, les médecins qui sachent guérir, les peintres qui sachent peindre.*

Nor, in looking at a work of art, should we be dreaming of what it symbolises, but rather loving it for what it is. Indeed, the transcendental spirit is alien to the spirit of art. The metaphysical mind of Asia may create for itself the monstrous and many-breasted idol, but to the Greek, pure Artist, that work is most instinct with spiritual

life which conforms most closely to the perfect facts of physical life also. Nor, in its primary aspect, has a painting, for instance, any more spiritual message or meaning for us than a blue tile from the wall of Damascus, or a Hitzen vase. It is a beautifully coloured surface, nothing more, and affects us by no suggestion stolen from philosophy, no pathos pilfered from literature, no feeling filched from a poet, but by its own incommunicable artistic essence—by that selection of truth which we call style, and that relation of values which is the draughtsmanship of painting, by the whole quality of the workmanship, the arabesque of the design, the splendour of the colour, for these things are enough to stir the most divine and remote of the chords which make music in our soul, and colour, indeed, is of itself a mystical presence in things, and tone a kind of sentiment.

This, then—the new departure of our younger school—is the chief characteristic of Mr. Rennell Rodd's poetry; for, while there is much in his work that may interest the intellect, much that will excite the emotions, and many cadenced chords of sweet and simple sentiment—for to those who love Art for its own sake all other things are added—yet the effect which they pre-

eminently seek to produce is purely an artistic one. Such a poem as "The Sea King's Grave," with all its majesty of melody, as sonorous and as strong as the sea by whose pine-fringed shores it was thus nobly conccived and nobly fashioned; or the little poem that follows it, whose cunning workmanship, wrought with such an artistic sense of limitation, one might liken to the rare chasing of the mirror that is its motive; or "In a Church," pale flower of one of those exquisite moments when all things except the moment itself seem so curiously real, and when thc old memories of forgotten days are touched and made tender, and the familiar place grows fervent and solemn suddenly with a vision of the undying beauty of the gods that died; or the scene in "Chartres Cathedral," sombre silence brooding on vault and arch, silent people kneeling on the dust of the desolate pavement as the young priest lifts Lord Christ's body in a crystal star, and then the sudden beams of scarlet light that break through the blazoned window and smite on the carven screen, and sudden organ peals of mighty music rolling and echoing from choir to canopy, and from spire to shaft, and over all the clear, glad voice of a singing boy, affecting one as a thing over-sweet, and striking just the right

artistic keynote for one's emotions; or "At Lanuvium," through the music of whose lines one seems to hear again the murmur of the Mantuan bees straying down from their own green valleys and inland streams to find what honeyed amber the sea flowers might be hiding; or the poem written "In the Coliseum," which gives one the same artistic joy that one gets watching a handicraftsman at his work, a goldsmith hammering out his gold into those thin plates as delicate as the petals of a yellow rose, or drawing it out into the long wires like tangled sunbeams, so perfect and precious in the mere handling of it; or the little lyric interludes that break in here and there like the singing of a thrush, and are as swift and as sure as the beating of a bird's wing, as light and bright as the apple-blossoms that flutter fitfully down to the orchard grass after a spring shower, and look the lovelier for the rain's tears lying on their dainty veinings of pink and pearl; or the sonnets —for Mr. Rodd is one of those *qui sonnent le sonnet,* as the Ronsardists used to say—that one called "On the Border Hills," with its fiery wonder of imagination and the strange beauty of its eighth line; or the one which tells of the sorrow of the great king for the little dead child—well,

all these poems aim, as I said, at producing a purely artistic effect, and have the rare and exquisite quality that belongs to work of that kind; and I feel that the entire subordination in our æsthetic movement of all merely emotional and intellectual motives to the vital informing poetic principle is the surest sign of our strength.

But it is not enough that a work of art should conform to the æsthetic demands of the age: there should be also about it, if it is to give us any permanent delight, the impress of a distinct individuality. Whatever work we have in the nineteenth century must rest on the two poles of personality and perfection. And so in this little volume, by separating the earlier and more simple work from the work that is later and stronger and possesses increased technical power and more artistic vision, one might weave these disconnected poems, these stray and scattered threads, into one fiery-coloured strand of life, noting first a boy's mere gladness of being young, with all its simple joy in field and flower, in sunlight and in song, and then the bitterness of sudden sorrow at the ending by death of one of the brief and beautiful friendships of one's youth, with all those unanswered longings and questionings unsatisfied by which we vex, so use-

lessly, the marble face of death; the artistic contrast between the discontented incompleteness of the spirit and the complete perfection of the style that expresses it forming the chief element of the æsthetic charm of these particular poems; and then the birth of Love, and all the wonder and the fear and the perilous delight of one on whose boyish brows the little wings of love have beaten for the first time; and the love songs, so dainty and delicate, little swallow flights of music, and full of such fragrance and freedom that they might all be sung in the open air and across moving water; and then autumn, coming with its quireless woods and odorous decay and ruined loveliness, Love lying dead; and the sense of the mere pity of it.

One might stop there, for from a young poet one should ask for no deeper chords of life than those that love and friendship make eternal for us; and the best poems in this volume belong clearly to a later time, a time when these real experiences become absorbed and gathered up into a form which seems from such real experiences to be the most alien and the most remote; when the simple expression of joy or sorrow suffices no longer, and lives rather in the stateliness of the cadenced metre, in the music and colour of the

linked words, than in any direct utterance; lives, one might say, in the perfection of the form more than in the pathos of the feeling. And yet, after the broken music of love and the burial of love in the autumn woods, we can trace that wandering among strange people, and in lands unknown to us, by which we try so pathetically to heal the hurts of the life we know, and that pure and passionate devotion to Art which one gets when the harsh reality of life has too suddenly wounded one, and is with discontent or sorrow marring one's youth, just as often, I think, as one gets it from any natural joy of living; and that curious intensity of vision by which, in moments of overmastering sadness and despair ungovernable, artistic things will live in one's memory with vivid realism caught from the life which they help one to forget—an old grey tomb in Flanders with a strange legend on it, making one think how, perhaps, passion does live on after death, a necklace of blue and amber beads and a broken mirror found in a girl's grave at Rome, a marble image of a boy habited like Eros, and, with the pathetic tradition of a great king's sorrow lingering about it like a purple shadow, over all these the tired spirit broods with that calm and certain joy that one

gets when one has found something that the ages never dull and the world cannot harm; and with it comes that desire of Greek things which is often an artistic method of expressing one's desire for perfection, and that longing for the old dead days which is so modern, so incomplete, so touching, being, in a way, the inverted torch of Hope, which burns the hand it should guide; and for many things a little sadness, and for all things a great love; and lastly, in the pine wood by the sea, once more the quick and vital pulse of joyous youth leaping and laughing in every line, the frank and fearless freedom of wave and wind waking into fire life's burnt-out ashes, and into song the silent lips of pain—how clearly one seems to see it all, the long colonnade of pines, with sea and sky peeping in here and there like a flitting of silver; the open place in the green, deep heart of the wood with the moss-grown altar to the old Italian god in it, and the flowers all about, cyclamen in the shadowy places, and the stars of the white narcissus lying like snowflakes over the grass, where the quick, bright-eyed lizard starts by the stone, and the snake lies coiled lazily in the sun on the hot sand, and overhead the gossamer floats from the branches like thin, tremulous threads of gold—

the scene is so perfect for its motive, for surely here, if anywhere, the real gladness of life might be revealed to one's youth—the gladness that comes, not from the rejection, but from the absorption of all passion, and is like that serene calm that dwells in the faces of the Greek statues, and which despair and sorrow cannot disturb but intensify only.

In some such way as this we could gather up these strewn and scattered petals of song into one perfect rose of life, and yet, perhaps, in so doing, we might be missing the true quality of the poems; one's real life is so often the life that one does not lead; and beautiful poems, like threads of beautiful silks, may be woven into many patterns and to suit many designs, all wonderful and all different: and romantic poetry, too, is essentially the poetry of impressions, being like that latest school of painting, the school of Whistler and Albert Moore, in its choice of situation as opposed to subject; in its dealing with the exceptions rather than with the types of life; in its brief intensity, in what one might call its fiery-coloured momentariness, it being indeed the momentary situations of life, the momentary aspects of nature, which poetry and painting now seek to render for

us. Sincerity and constancy will the artist, indeed, have always, but sincerity in art is merely that plastic perfection of execution without which a poem or a painting, however noble its sentiment or human its origin, is but wasted and unreal work, and the constancy of the artist cannot be to any definite rule or system of living, but to that principle of beauty only through which the inconstant shadows of his life are in their most fleeting moment arrested and made permanent. He will not, for instance, in intellectual matters, acquiesce in that facile orthodoxy of our day which is so reasonable and so artistically uninteresting, nor yet will he desire that fiery faith of the antique time which, while it intensified, yet limited, the vision; still less will he allow the calm of his culture to be marred by the discordant despair of doubt or the sadness of a sterile scepticism, for—the Valley Perilous, where ignorant armies clash by night, is no resting-place meet for her to whom the gods have assigned the clear upland, the serene height, and the sunlit air—rather will he be always curiously testing new forms of belief, tinging his nature with the sentiment that still lingers about some beautiful creeds, and searching for experience itself, and not for the fruits of experi-

ence, when he has got its secret, he will leave without regret much that was once very precious to him. "I am always sincere," says Emerson somewhere, "as knowing that there are other moods." *"Les émotions,"* wrote Théophile Gautier once in a review of Arsène Houssaye, *"Les émotions ne se ressemblent pas, mais être ému—voilà l'important."*

Now this is the secret of the art of the modern romantic school, and gives one the right keynote for its apprehension; but the real quality of all work which, like Mr. Rodd's, aims, as I said, at a purely artistic effect, cannot be described in terms of intellectual criticism; it is too intangible for that. One can perhaps convey it best in terms of the other arts, and by reference to them; and, indeed, some of these poems are as iridescent and as exquisite as a lovely fragment of Venetian glass; others as delicate in perfect workmanship and as simple in natural motive as an etching by Whistler is, or one of those beautiful little Greek figures which in the olive woods round Tanagra men can still find, with the faint gilding and the fading crimson not yet fled from hair and lips and raiment; and many of them seem like one of Corot's twilights just passing into music, for not merely

in visible colour, but in sentiment also—which is the colour of poetry—may there be a kind of tone.

But I think that the best likeness to the quality of this young poet's work I ever saw was in the landscape by the Loire. We were staying once, he and I, at Amboise, that little village with its grey slate roofs and steep streets and gaunt, grim gateway, where the quiet cottages nestle like white pigeons into the sombre clefts of the great bastioned rock, and the stately Renaissance houses stand silent and apart—very desolate now, but with some memory of the old days still lingering about the delicately twisted pillars, and the carved doorways with their grotesque animals, and laughing masks and quaint heraldic devices, all reminding one of a people who could not think life real till they had made it fantastic. And above the village, and beyond the bend of the river, we used to go in the afternoon and sketch from one of the big barges that bring the wine in autumn and the wood in winter down to the sea, or lie in the long grass and make plans *pour la gloire, et pour ennuyer les Philistins,* or wander along the low, sedgy banks, "matching our reeds in sportive rivalry," as comrades used in the old Sicilian days; and the land was an ordinary land enough, and

bare, too, when one thought of Italy, and how the oleanders were robing the hillsides by Genoa in scarlet, and the cyclamen filling with its purple every valley from Florence to Rome; for there was not much real beauty, perhaps, in it, only long, white dusty roads and straight rows of formal poplars; but now and then some little breaking gleam of broken light would lend to the grey field and the silent barn a secret and a mystery that were hardly their own, would transfigure for one exquisite moment the peasants passing down through the vineyard, or the shepherd watching on the hill, would tip the willows with silver, and touch the river into gold; and the wonder of the effect, with the strange simplicity of the material, always seemed to me to be a little like the quality of these the verses of my friend.

OSCAR WILDE.

1882.

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